

A vertical, narrow stained glass window with a grey background. The window features intricate leaded glass designs, including a central figure of a person kneeling in prayer, surrounded by floral and geometric patterns. The design is symmetrical and detailed, typical of traditional stained glass art.

BYU

STUDIES

INVOLVING READERS
IN THE LATTER-DAY SAINT
ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE



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CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

Inquiry, Scholarship, and Learning and Teaching in Religiously Affiliated Colleges and Universities

A Conference Held at Brigham Young University, February 27, 2009

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**INQUIRY, SCHOLARSHIP, AND LEARNING
AND TEACHING IN RELIGIOUSLY AFFILIATED
COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES**

A Conference Held at Brigham Young University
February 27, 2009



Oxford, which poet Matthew Arnold described as the “city of dreaming spires,” is home to the oldest university in the English-speaking world. Photograph of All Souls College, Oxford, England, © istockphoto.com/David Joyner.

Inquiry, Scholarship, and Learning and Teaching in Religiously Affiliated Colleges and Universities

Gerrit W. Gong

Not long ago, I had opportunity to visit my other alma mater. Especially when the late afternoon sun burnishes Oxford's Cotswold sandstone buildings, the City of Spires radiates a passion for ideas and life, as if ready to crackle into open flame—all, of course, in an understated British sort of way. Oxford memories layer across the years. I remember riding my bike, academic gown in hand, to Christ Church College, where Peter Pulzer conducted European international history tutorials. During our one-on-one discussions, he might Socratically mention in passing that Cardinal Woolsey gave Christ Church the trees visible from his window in the back meadows even as we analyzed competing interpretations of Bismarck's balance of power and German hegemony strategies as they illuminated contemporary Middle East developments involving Iran.

Among other such memories, I smile as I recall my college crew team wanting to kick me off the boat. Instead of rowing according to the cox's command, I was daydreaming about a girl as the beautiful autumn light sparkled on the Cherwell River. Because my wife and I courted from two different continents, I can honestly say I earned a PhD in international relations.

The oldest in the English-speaking world, Oxford as a university dates to the eleventh century, certainly to 1167 when British students lost options to study abroad. Universities hold a special place in Western civilization. We repose wisdom, knowledge, and the inculcation of attitudes and values in universities. We entrust universities to pass the torch of open and consequential inquiry from generation to generation, hopefully burning brighter as it goes. At Brigham Young University, as with sister universities everywhere, we are committed to free and open inquiry,

creative and rigorous pursuit of knowledge and truth, and the instilling of attitudes and skills for lifelong learning and service.

Convened on February 27, 2009, BYU's university-wide conference on "Inquiry, Scholarship, and Learning and Teaching in Religiously Affiliated Colleges and Universities" was intended to evidence and celebrate the university's abiding commitment to the principles and values of free and open inquiry, to seeking and asking, to inviting ongoing vigorous testing and discussing of who we are and how we become the best we can be. Our questions are fundamental and challenging. How does BYU preserve and promote the values of free and open inquiry as extolled by the American academy of which BYU is part, at the same time preserving and promoting the standards and values of faith central to a religiously affiliated learning and teaching community? How is scholarship, as well as learning and teaching, pursued in religiously affiliated universities, and at BYU in particular?

Over time and across experience, a broad diversity of universities and colleges has arisen. This wide spectrum of institutions—each with its own mission and constituent populations—is a strength of higher education, in the best sense, in America and abroad. Some institutions are large, others small. Some draw from international, national, or regional audiences; others serve specific communities—for example, Native American tribes or adult, professional, or nontraditional students. Some universities emphasize undergraduate teaching; others conduct research; and some—like BYU—do both. Some universities offer comprehensive general education and specialized curricula across multiple disciplines; others provide targeted academic offerings. Some universities offer primarily distance education while others maintain traditional on-campus cohorts of freshmen to seniors. Truly one size does not fit all.

Whatever their shape, size, or mission, universities across the United States, including BYU, share a common commitment: They seek to demonstrate educational excellence and to engage in continuous improvement as defined by their institutional missions. Universities encourage and support each other through voluntary peer review. Such peer-review processes recognize and respect each institution's unique circumstance and mission within a tradition and context of American higher education rooted in free inquiry, open scholarship, and the best practices of learning and teaching, which challenge faculty and students to advance understanding and truth in consequential ways.

Brigham Young University attracts the best and brightest from every state in this country, and from over 120 countries across the world. Our faculty and students come largely but not solely from the faith tradition of

BYU's sponsoring church—and those at BYU not of the Latter-day Saint faith represent a cross section of the world's religions, a cross section of Christian faiths, and some without religious affiliation. All at BYU voluntarily agree to adhere to the university's honor code, which endorses honesty, integrity, and respect for others.

Among the thirty thousand students at BYU, about 90 percent are undergraduate students and about 10 percent are graduate students. Our board of trustees has defined BYU as primarily an undergraduate teaching institution, with selected graduate programs of excellence. Our mission and university aims, as expressed in our BYU foundational documents and in our daily practice, bespeak our commitment to our students being exposed to and mastering general and discipline-specific education, every aspect of sound reasoning and communication (including critical reading, writing, oral, and other forms of presentation), and the nurturing of a passion for learning and service. In the spirit of the phrase attributed to Yeats, for us "education is not the filling of a bucket, but the lighting of a fire."

BYU also seeks to help prepare our students to take responsible and contributing places in families, communities, and countries around the world. Today's interconnected world is simultaneously borderless and constituted by a competing diversity of sovereign political countries.¹ This world needs everywhere university graduates who are competent, compassionate, contributing individuals of character and skill, who exhibit the humility of lifelong learning and the passion and commitment of practicable service.

By definition, universities thrive on the exchange of ideas, whether among faculty, students, and administrators or among freshmen, alumni, university supporters, and trustees. In the end, we are all learners and all teachers.

Seeing the world from multiple perspectives and in multiple dimensions opens inquiry, challenges conventional wisdoms, and facilitates exchange of best practices. Especially for that reason, BYU openly invited and was pleased to have strong participation in its Inquiry Conference from students, staff, faculty, and administrators representing disciplines and backgrounds all across campus. Audience and program likewise included distinguished alumni and BYU's always-generous supporters. President Henry B. Eyring, an officer of the BYU Board of Trustees, participated, bringing his lifetime involvement with American higher education, as did President Cecil O. Samuelson, who provides the concluding presentation in these proceedings.

In addition, BYU was honored to welcome distinguished academic leaders from beyond BYU. Professor Thomas Hibbs, Dean of the Honors

College at Baylor University, and Dr. Sandra Elman, president of the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities, added vital perspective and insight to the conference. Such cross-pollinating perspectives allow us all to test assumptions and refine the articulation of our experiences and views.

Fundamental, enduring questions often reflect enduring dynamic tensions. Some issues relevant to preserving and protecting academic freedom are best resolved in the daily scholarship, learning, or teaching of an individual faculty member or student. Other such issues invite continued discussion in departmental, college, or university forums, such as this conference. In that sense, it is the ongoing spirit of free and open inquiry that provides its best confirmatory evidence, as well as the best safeguard for its own continuance.

Overall, the BYU Inquiry Conference sought to affirm by policy statement and living practice BYU's deep commitment to the shared values and approaches of the American academy and to our own unique mission. This collection of contributions to the conference seeks to capture this ongoing campuswide discussion. It invites readers to join the continuing open dialogue, so pertinent in this time, regarding approaches, roles, and relations as they involve inquiry, scholarship, and learning and teaching in religiously affiliated colleges and universities, including Brigham Young University.

Gerrit W. Gong was sustained a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints on April 3, 2010. In February 2009, when the Inquiry Conference took place, he was Assistant to the President for Planning and Assessment at Brigham Young University. Dr. Gong holds PhD and master's of philosophy degrees in international relations from Oxford University, England, where he was a Rhodes Scholar. He has researched and taught at Oxford, Johns Hopkins (School of Advanced International Studies), Georgetown, and Brigham Young Universities. At the invitation of the U.S. Secretary of Education, Gong served on the Department of Education's National Advisory Committee for Institutional Quality and Integrity (NACIQI). He participated in two national education summits. He worked for twenty years at the U.S. Department of State and as China Chair and Asia Director at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) in Washington, D.C. He has also worked with multinational companies, nongovernmental organizations, and research institutes around the world. Gerrit Gong was raised in Palo Alto, California. He and his wife, Susan, have four sons and a yellow Labrador named Huckleberry.

1. The United Nations recognizes 192 countries; the United States 194 sovereign entities.

Integration, Inquiry, and the Hopeful Search for Truth

Thomas S. Hibbs

Thank you for this opportunity to be with you today. I cannot think of any topics more important at this time and place in American history and in the history of Christian higher education than those we will be dealing with today. This is a time of great and dramatic opportunity for faith-based institutions, an opportunity we need to seize with equal parts gusto and prudence.

Over the past five to ten years, a strange discontent has bubbled up out of the nation's leading universities. If I had to put my finger on the source of this discontent—and this is out of Harvard, Yale, Princeton—I'd say that leading administrators at many institutions are confronting the perplexing realization that universities seem unable to be universities. Universities seem unable to gain and implement the self-understanding of what they are as an institution, the purpose of what they do in the classroom with their students, and what they hope to form in their students and to produce as graduates.

Harry R. Lewis, former dean at Harvard University, published a book a few years back called *Excellence without a Soul: How a Great University Forgot Education*. Derek Bok, former and more recently again interim president at Harvard, wrote a book entitled *Our Underachieving Colleges: A Candid Look at How Much Students Learn and Why They Should Be Learning More*. Anthony T. Konman, a former law school dean at Yale, wrote *Education's End: Why Our Colleges and Universities Have Given Up on the Meaning of Life*. The double entendre in the title reflects the author's laments that while liberal education seems to be losing its sense of purpose, he wants to focus not on the question of its demise but on reviving the question of its goal or purpose. David Brooks, who writes for the

New York Times, has famously written about Ivy League students in a 2001 *Atlantic Monthly* article titled “The Organization Kid.” He has also written a couple of books about education.

Two other fascinating books to note: Andrew Delbanco, whom *Time Magazine* has called America’s best social critic, is planning to publish *College: What It Was, Is, and Should Be*; and Alasdair MacIntyre, one of the premier Christian philosophers, has written *God, Philosophy, Universities: A Selective History of the Catholic Philosophical Tradition*.

Why is it that the university today cannot seem to be a university? Running through all of these analyses are certain common diagnoses. Certain focuses on certain kinds of symptoms reveal a libertarianism among faculty and students: You do your thing, I’ll do mine. Leave me alone to do my research.

Students say leave me alone to get my grades—and to do whatever I want to do when I am not in the classroom. Hence the fanciful and lurid descriptions of college life in Tom Wolfe’s *I Am Charlotte Simmons*. A *Rolling Stone* article a couple of years back contrasted day Duke and night Duke and noted how completely separate they are from one another.

Faculty express concern about overly specialized scholarship, isolation of faculty from students, and isolation of faculty from one another. As Brooks explains eloquently, today’s students are hardworking, tolerant, and easygoing but often do not find anywhere in university life anything that helps them think about the whole of their lives, or even a long-term vision of ten, fifteen, or twenty years. Instead, students say they tend to think in only very immediate terms about putting another notch on the résumé. No one is helping students articulate in a serious way the questions that comprise the arc of their whole life, what we used to call the question of vocation. There seems everywhere a loss of common purpose, decline and erosion of shared communal life, and absence of any serious attention to the notion of vocation.

No matter if it is secular or faith-based, education has to be about integration. In order to correct these problems that seem increasingly prominent in higher education across this nation, we need integration. We need various kinds of integration. We need a greater integration of faculty and students. From the faculty side, we need an integration of scholarship and teaching. Faculty want to see their scholarship connect with their teaching, and their teaching feed their scholarship. Students need a greater integration of what occurs in the classroom and the dorm.

Even before I became a dean, I believed the two main things that especially faith-based institutions have to be serious about are hiring and curriculum. If you ask administrators at faith-based institutions what it means to be a faith-based institution and they do not mention hiring and

curriculum in a serious way, they are not serious. The third thing I would add—and this reflects my experience as an administrator with responsibility for running dorms as we do at Baylor—is student life.

You simply cannot let student life go on in a way that is, at worst, hostile to what is going on in the classroom or, at best, indifferent to it. You have to find a way of bridging these artificial gaps between what students are doing in the classroom and what they do outside of the classroom. Can you do all this and also integrate faith into what you are doing? Wouldn't it just be enough to say, "We are working really hard at having faculty make connections between scholarship and their teaching, and we are working really hard to bridge the gap between what goes on in the classroom and what goes on in the dorm"? Isn't it too much of a burden to try to integrate this other thing called faith? I think, in fact, faith is what makes the other two or three kinds of integration easier and more feasible.

A few years back, Pope John Paul II issued an encyclical regarding Catholic universities called *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* (From the Heart of the Church). Historically in the West, in the Middle Ages and even in the modern world, universities arose out of the hearts of churches. This is something we are too apt today to forget. It is a historical question that is and will continue to be answered over the next fifty to one hundred years, whether without that impetus, that inspiration, that source of integration, universities can remain universities. Not whether they can remain faith-based universities, but having lost their faith-based foundations, can they remain universities at all? There is significant doubt today about the future of the university from leading higher education figures, as I mentioned at the outset.

I want to talk briefly about three areas of integration. I think they map nicely onto the three areas I have already mentioned of student life, hiring and faculty development, and curriculum.

The first is that, out of our faith-based resources, we have ways of thinking about the connection between the life of the mind and the rest of human life, or between the intellect and character. For instance, in the Honors College at Baylor, we run two dorms, one for men and one for women. Faculty members live in the dorms. Other faculty have offices in the dorms. Classes are based in the dorms. We have a chapel in the dorms where students can engage in morning and evening prayer. In this context, and when students eat together, this connection between the life of the mind and the rest of human life is also there. I like to say the greatest thing about having dorms is that they are a way of scheduling spontaneous conversations between interesting, bright, eager-to-learn young people. That makes our job in the classroom more interesting and more likely to be successful.

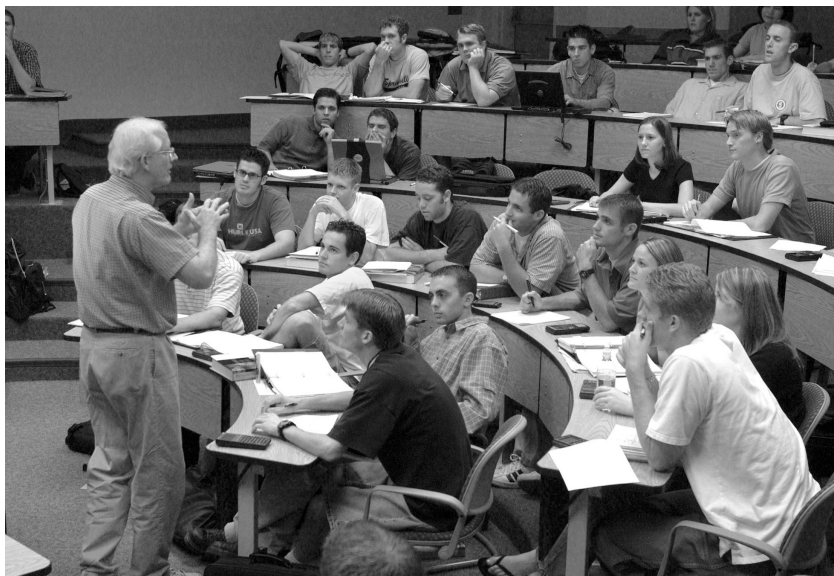
We want to create spaces that integrate the academic, the social, and the spiritual. In part, this has to do with the geography of our campuses and with the kinds of public gathering spaces we have, but especially it has to do with the ways students interact with one another, the ways in which study, social life, and worship can be seamlessly combined. This way students not only hear about but experience the integration of academic life, social life, spiritual life.

Next I want to talk briefly about inquiry and hope. There seems to be a lot of despair in the country about inquiry, about whether inquiry can ever really get us to the truth, and a hopelessness that can invade especially the hearts and minds of young people. As teachers we have all experienced the mindless, unreflective relativism that students can bring to the classroom. You probably have less of that feeling here at BYU than in many places, but it is amazing how pervasive are the themes “Who knows what the truth is?” and “This opinion is as good as that opinion.”

Of course, if you press the argument, students are unclear about what they really think or believe. Typically, they do not have cogent reasons to support this or that point. But whether as cause, symptom, or effect, this kind of unreflective relativism denotes a kind of despair. There is a sense that even if I worked at it, I could not get to the truth. This is where teachers of Christian faith are absolutely crucial in our classrooms: to exemplify the belief that truth will come to us, one way or another; that inquiry can lead somewhere; and that hope in inquiry will be fruitful.

Whatever the link in content between faith and learning, there ought to be a link that pervades Christian campuses between inquiry and the hope for the attainment of truth. This makes hope and attainment possible. It makes the experience of wonder deep and rich. And it is that experience of wonder that characterizes our life on this journey from birth to death and beyond. It is wonder at the glory of creation, which science can lead us to see. It is wonder at the beauty of art and literature, at the probing of the great questions in philosophy.

Our faculty and our communities ought to embody this wonder. Wonder is a marvelous thing. It recognizes our status between having absolute certitude about the final truth of all things and being mired in paralyzing doubt and despair. To be in wonder, as Josef Pieper says at one point, is to be *en via*, on the way, on a quest. W. E. B. Du Bois, writing in his marvelous works about higher education and the souls of black folk, says the true purpose of education is to consider the riddle of human existence. It is not to earn meat but to examine the end and goal of that life that meat nourishes. And yet wonder, if it is not inspired by hope, can easily lead to despair and a sacrifice of the intellectual life. It is absolutely crucial that we have faculty who embody wonder. And they are more likely to embody



Teachers of Christian faith are absolutely crucial in our classrooms: to exemplify the belief that truth will come to us, one way or another; that inquiry can lead somewhere; and that hope in inquiry will be fruitful. Courtesy Brigham Young University Photography.

wonder if they have active faith commitments in their lives and in the activity of their intellects.

Connected is the notion of the unity of truth. This is really a starting point for thinking about curriculum. As believers, we have a faith in the unity of truth. My great mentor Thomas Aquinas says at one point the truths of faith and truths of reason cannot contradict one another. He does not say it is going to be easy. It is not that we can wake up and sense a contradiction and ten minutes later we will have resolved it simply by invoking faith. But Aquinas does say in the final analysis there cannot be a conflict.

We believe in the unity of truth. Students see the unity of truth in part by seeing how the parts of their education fit together. This is one of the great laments coming out of the Ivy League schools currently. Students and faculty do not see how the parts of education are really a whole. And you cannot have a university unless administrators, faculty, and students see, at least in some partial way, how the parts complement one another and constitute a whole. That is a matter of curriculum: unity of truth comes from beginning to see how the parts overlap and complement one another.

Let me end with some brief observations. I have taught at two very different Catholic schools. I am now at a Baptist institution. After I came out of the University of Notre Dame, my first teaching job was at Thomas

Aquinas College, a small Catholic St. John's-great-books sort of school. When I got to Thomas Aquinas in 1987, we drove to a plot of land and got out of the car. I asked the fellow who had driven, "Where's the campus?" At that point, they had one permanent building and fifteen trailers. Now if you go to the Thomas Aquinas website, the entire campus plan, including the church, has been built. It is a gorgeous campus. It has three or four times the number of students it had in 1987 and double the number of faculty. In my faculty interview there, it was not just expected I would take Catholic education seriously. It was not just expected I would take certain Catholic authors like Augustine and Thomas Aquinas seriously. In the interview, I was asked whether I considered myself a disciple of Thomas Aquinas. So there was a very focused notion of what the institution was about. Yet the institution actively discouraged faculty research and publication because it wanted us to focus on the lives of students, on the classroom, and on the communal interaction among the faculty. There are many virtues to that model.

I left Thomas Aquinas to go to the other coast—to Boston College. (Probably I should have said I was going from "right coast" to "left coast." In essence, I was going from what the Catholic spectrum would consider one of the most conservative Catholic institutions in Southern California to one of the more liberal Catholic institutions in New England.) At Boston College, there is a serious commitment to research. It is so serious that some worry—and they should worry—whether faculty take teaching seriously enough. It is as though teaching evaluations matter only if they are really stellar or really bad. Otherwise, it seems faculty teaching evaluations are set aside, while publications are emphasized.

Partly because of where it is located, Boston College is also a place where faculty do not see one another or see students very much. Although Boston College is trying to make changes, student life was for the most part left to go its own way. For example, it struck me that students I taught in their junior and senior year were those who, almost by fortunate accident, had good roommates in their freshman and sophomore years. These students developed friendships with people who enabled them to be good students and avoid the toxic parts of the wider culture that surrounds Boston College.

Baylor, where I am now, is of course a Baptist institution. We are trying to pull off the integration of all these things. We require faculty to be active participants in a church, to be able to describe their faith journey, and to tell how it informs their research and what they do in the classroom. These are open-ended queries. There is no single answer regarding how to integrate these areas. Some people at certain points in their career are more articulate than others. Yet if you have a community that as a whole is committed

to this integration, you can bring in some people who are not yet articulate in these areas, but who can grow by being part of a community.

We are attempting to make connections between scholarship and teaching. We encourage faculty to broaden their publications on the basis of their teaching beyond areas of specialization. As I mentioned about dorms, we do not want to frighten students when we are recruiting them that they will have faculty following them around campus. Yet we want them to know they will see a lot of faculty from day to day. This is good for students and good for faculty.

The real danger for Christian higher education in America today is success. We all want to do better. We take what we do seriously. Much of what *U.S. News and World Report* measures is real. We have to, we ought to, take those things seriously. But the real danger is success. If we become obsessed with the external signs that what we are doing is succeeding, we lose the goods, the purposes without which education cannot continue to exist. In the philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre's phrase, "We substitute external goods for internal goods." The internal goods of education are the growth and formation of young minds; the external goods are bigger endowments, rankings, numbers of publications in peer-reviewed journals. Those things help, and we cannot discount them, but when we focus more on those things than on the internal goods, we become corrupt as an institution. We will fail not just as believers, but also as members of the guild of the university.

And so I leave you with this challenge and this paradox. It may be, in this time and place, that the only places where universities can really be universities are places that have a source of faith, a transcendent framework within which we understand the activities of integration, inquiry, and the hopeful search for truth. These are the sources that help the university better to be a university.

Thomas S. Hibbs is currently Distinguished Professor of Ethics and Culture and Dean of the Honors College at Baylor University, where he oversees a number of interdisciplinary programs, including the Honors Program, the Great Texts major, and the Baylor Interdisciplinary Core. As dean, Hibbs is involved with student recruitment, enrollment management, development of curricula, and faculty recruitment and development. With degrees from the University of Dallas and the University of Notre Dame, Hibbs taught at Boston College for thirteen years, where he was full professor and department chair in philosophy. At Baylor, he has been involved in ecumenical discussions of the work of John Courtney Murray and John Paul II. In addition to teaching a variety of interdisciplinary courses, Hibbs teaches in the fields of medieval philosophy, contemporary virtue ethics, and philosophy and popular culture. He speaks regularly at American high schools and universities and also at conferences in Europe.

Faith and Inquiry

Justin F. White

My wife's uncle recently, and somewhat smugly, said something to the effect, "It's too bad you're studying philosophy (or perhaps any subject) at BYU since you only get one perspective." For the most part, I've found this is simply not true. I've found professors and students not nearly as homogeneous as often portrayed. Though I agree with my wife's uncle that we should engage in dialogue with those of differing opinions, since there are, of course, disadvantages when only a single perspective is represented on a topic, I'd like to focus on one potential positive interpretation of the sameness he suggested. There is at Brigham Young University a shared ground of faith, and not only should that faith be a vital element of BYU, it can play a similar role at other religiously affiliated schools. I would like to suggest briefly three ways that faith influences, or can influence, scholarship and the teaching and learning process. First, faith can open up inquiry, encouraging us to seek truth. Second, faith can make certain things stand out or become salient as we learn and research. Third, faith can give us a vision of the divine potential in others, and this vision can transform the learning process.

I believe that the gospel suggests a sort of faith in inquiry, in which we are encouraged to seek all truth. Brigham Young, for example, said, "Every accomplishment, every polished grace, every useful attainment in mathematics, music, and in all science and art belong to the Saints, and they should avail themselves as expeditiously as possible of the wealth of knowledge the sciences offer to every diligent and persevering scholar."¹

This could be read in a number of ways, but one is certainly as a charge to seek out the best in all fields, from chemistry to music to literature. Faith, it seems, opens the door to seek learning from all corners.

And this learning ought to include both the inspiring and the challenging. I remember that Gary Browning, whose Dostoevsky class was both inspiring and deeply challenging, included this quote by Joseph Smith in the course packet: “Thy mind, O man! if thou wilt lead a soul unto salvation, must stretch as high as the utmost heavens, and search into and contemplate the darkest abyss, and the broad expanse of eternity—thou must commune with God.”² This passage gave greater purpose to my reading for this class and other classes. My faith encouraged me to take my studies seriously, and this leads to my second point.

Faith will make certain things stand out in the process of inquiry. I recently visited a friend attending Harvard. He had mentioned to a friend that he thought it was interesting to see so many scriptures from the Bible engraved around campus. The friend, surprised, responded, referring to one in particular, “That is from the Bible?” Some may find this story funny, but it also has a serious dimension. Faith may not always drastically alter what appears in the inquiry process, though it may, but it can add a new dimension of importance to already important issues or topics. And I think this applies to all sorts of fields—from chemistry to education to comparative literature.

Finally, faith can give us a vision of the divine potential in others, and this vision can transform the learning process. Several years ago one of my professors responded to one of my short papers with this: “You don’t write badly. . . . But you don’t yet write well. You are average or somewhat better than average as a writer, but . . . you could also write . . . much better. It will probably take continued practice. That isn’t something that happens overnight. But I encourage you to keep working at it because I think you could do well.” I’m sure that most of us here could point to a similar experience, perhaps even several times, when someone called us to be better and really believed that we could be better. Part of this comes from being willing to point out weaknesses and areas that are lacking, and part of it is being able to really see something better in those around us, something that allows us to say, “Keep working at it” or “You could really do well in this.” This type of experience can certainly happen in other universities and in other settings. But I believe that there is a unique possibility for such experiences when we have faith in the extraordinary potential of those in our midst, and this faith is at the heart of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

I have, admittedly, left many questions open about the role of faith in scholarship, teaching, and learning, as well as the place and the role of religiously affiliated institutions in higher education. But we ought to be careful of too quickly closing our minds in the name of faith, for our faith can be, and ought to be, at the heart of our teaching and scholarship.

Justin F. White graduated with university honors from Brigham Young University in December 2008 with a BA in philosophy and English. He has worked as a peer mentor and research assistant for Freshman Academy, BYU's learning community organization, and as a research assistant for professors in English and philosophy. He has presented papers at conferences in the fields of philosophy, religion, and education and has co-edited with James Faulconer a collection of essays on contemporary issues from a Latter-day Saint perspective. He has also published articles in *Perspectives* and *Aporia*, student journals of Germanic and Slavic studies and philosophy, respectively.

1. Brigham Young, in *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. (Liverpool: F. D. Richards, 1855–86), 10:224.

2. Joseph Fielding Smith, comp., *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1972), 137.

Academic Freedom at BYU from the Perspective of Someone Who Is Not a Latter-day Saint

Brent D. Slife

I am the odd duck of our panel. Not only am I a BYU faculty member who is *not* a Latter-day Saint, but I am also a psychologist. I say “odd duck” because psychologists are often considered a bit weird, and I would surely qualify. Still, I mostly want to call attention to my non-LDS status because I’d like to describe the incredible freedom and fertilization I’ve experienced at a predominantly LDS university. And I’ve been around the university “block,” so to speak, having served on the faculty of several major religious and secular universities. Here at BYU, I’ve enjoyed a freedom that I haven’t experienced elsewhere, even at many religious universities.

At most of the other universities, religion was understood as a subjective phenomenon, full of values and strong biases. This meant, in my discipline especially, that objective science was far better than religion, at least for advancing the knowledge of psychology. Science is thought to establish value-free and bias-free facts about the world, whereas religion starts with values and biases and thus is hampered in seeing the psychological world for what it really is.

I’ve since learned that this understanding of religion and science is a sophisticated myth. Science is just as value-laden and biased as religion; it just has different values and biases than religion, which is both its strength and its weakness. If science truly starts with values, what are they and how do they compare to Christian values? With a few rare exceptions, nobody discusses this in my discipline, yet psychologists are constantly persuading their clients to adhere to values that the psychologists themselves do not see as values.

As a quick example, you all know that scientists are supposed to be objective and open-minded, especially to new information. So, psychological counselors try to be open-minded in their counseling sessions, trying to be open to the information and values of their clients. The problem is that these counselors are not so open to their closed-minded clients, such as devoutly religious clients. If they *were* truly open, of course, they would be open to the “closed-minded” values of their clients.

What we see repeatedly in our studies, however, is that open-minded counselors are not open to values that don’t fit their open-mindedness. In other words, their openness is a value, not a *nonvalue*. Indeed, not only will these counselors try to persuade their clients to become more open-minded (that is, to adopt the values of their counselors), but they will also consider their clients “abnormal” until they do. I’ve written about this very issue, calling psychological counselors “crypto-missionaries,” because they are unrecognized missionaries of their own unrecognized values.¹

I can provide examples that more directly pertain to science and scholarship in our later discussion; my point here is that the value-ladenness of both enterprises, science and religion, allowed me in my career to see that science wasn’t inherently superior to religion for advancing psychological knowledge. Indeed, if I didn’t agree with the often hidden values of science, I might not *want* to advance knowledge with scientific values. One of the advantages of Christianity, in my view, is that its values are relatively “up front,” whereas the values of science are, as I said, relatively hidden. This means, among other things, that religious values have been examined and scientific values have not. In fact, I just contributed to a special issue of a venerable psychology journal called *Counseling and Values*, where we did the unprecedented: we explicated and examined many of the values of social science.²

I say all this because these lessons about my discipline helped me to see that I didn’t have to compartmentalize my Christian activities away from my disciplinary activities. I didn’t have to adopt one set of beliefs and assumptions in my Christianity and then adopt another set of beliefs and assumptions in my psychology. BYU was, at the time, a beacon for encouraging me to avoid this compartmentalization. BYU gave me the support and permission, even as a non-Mormon, to explore the values that made the most sense to me. In the next presentation, Dr. Brinton will describe a *wonderful* example of how her Christian values guided her work with a young boy and his language impairment.

As another example of this Christian guidance, consider a fascinating program of studies that my colleague Patrick Steffen and I are currently conducting that illustrates the importance of a specifically Christian framework for research. Health psychologists, such as Dr. Steffen, have

long been baffled by what is sometimes known as the “Mexican paradox.” To understand this paradox, you need to know that it is a well-established fact that most people in the United States have a higher risk of heart problems than the people of many other countries, including Mexico. Also well-established is what happens when the people of these other countries immigrate to the U.S.—their risk of heart problems increases significantly the longer they live in our bustling environment.

One of the most interesting exceptions to this trend is a certain subset of Mexican immigrants who attend church regularly. Something about attending church buffers these particular immigrants from higher cardiac risk. What is it? As you might guess with a secular discipline like psychology, the first hypotheses had nothing to do with the religion of these churches. Health psychologists initially assumed that these immigrants were simply getting more social support or more structure than other immigrants—nothing uniquely to do with their religion or their relation to their God. Yet further research has not borne out these hypotheses. When these religious immigrants were compared to nonreligious immigrants who were themselves equally supported and structured, the regular church-attenders were *still* better protected from higher cardiac risk—hence, the Mexican paradox.

What Dr. Steffen and I proposed was a completely theological, or religious, explanation for this paradox. I don’t have time to go into the details here, but we made the case that a unique kind of community was happening in these churches that was not available elsewhere—not only a special kind of *agape* love but also a relationship with a Lord who actively loved them. We proposed this unprecedentedly religious rationale for a series of studies to investigate this and other hypotheses, and we were recently granted \$200,000 from the Duke Foundation to do so.

Needless to say, this kind of study is unheard of—not because the rationale doesn’t make sense, but because religion is not supposed to intrude into science. Religion, as you’ll recall, is considered too subjective for the objectivity of science. Consequently, most universities would absolutely discourage, if not prohibit, such an outlandish project; our particular Christian values would be viewed as subjective dogma, not sufficiently open-minded and value-free for science. Thank God BYU didn’t discourage us from this project. In fact, our administrators encouraged our explorations, and our data so far look as if we might be able to make a unique contribution to the psychological literature—a contribution only possible with the freedom available here at Brigham Young University.

Brent D. Slife is Professor of Psychology at Brigham Young University, where he chairs the doctoral program in theoretical and philosophical psychology and serves as a member of the doctoral program in clinical psychology. He has been honored recently with several awards for his scholarship and teaching, including the Presidential Citation from the American Psychological Association for his contribution to psychology, and the Karl G. Maeser Award for top researcher at BYU. Slife moved from Baylor University, where he served as Director of Clinical Training for many years and was honored as Outstanding Research Professor and received the Circle of Achievement award for his teaching. He recently served as the president of the Society of Theoretical and Philosophical Psychology, on the Council of the American Psychological Association, and on the editorial boards of six journals. He has authored over 160 articles and six books and continues his psychotherapy practice of over twenty-five years, where he specializes in marital and family therapies.

1. Brent D. Slife, Amy Fisher Smith, and Colin M. Burchfield, "Psychotherapists as Crypto-Missionaries: An Exemplar on the Crossroads of History, Theory, and Philosophy," in Darryl B. Hill and Michael J. Kral, eds., *About Psychology: Essays at the Crossroads of History, Theory, and Philosophy* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2003), 55–72.

2. Brent D. Slife, "A Primer of the Values Implicit in Counseling Research," *Counseling and Values* 53, no. 1 (2008): 8–21.

The Academic Anablep

Bonnie Brinton

A few years ago, we visited an aquarium when we were on vacation. I remember looking in a tank that had the most fascinating little fish called anableps. Anableps like to cruise the surface of the water. They are called four-eyed fish because they appear to have four eyes—two that sit above the water level and two that sit below the water level. In truth, the anablep does not have four eyes—it has two eyes that are divided to allow the fish to see things that are above it in the air as well as things that are below it in the water. Anableps are adapted to make sense of all these images, to keep track of predators above them in the air and food below them in the water at the same time—to plunge or leap accordingly.

For me, working in a religious institution allows me to be something of an academic anablep. That is, I can use information gained through spiritual means at the same time that I am observing and testing the phenomena in the world around me. I am a speech-language pathologist specializing in working with children who do not communicate well because they have language impairment, learning disabilities, autism spectrum disorder, or other challenges. I have been involved in clinical work and research here at BYU and at other universities. I am essentially in the business of trying to understand how human beings learn to communicate as they mature and how various disabling factors wreak havoc with that process. Like Dr. Slife, I am also involved in clinical work. I teach students to intervene in the lives of others in an attempt to enhance their growth patterns and change their behavior.

Intervening in the lives of others is a serious proposition—not something to be taken lightly. We cannot deny that intervention is essentially a moral endeavor. I agree with Dr. Slife in asserting that there is no



Anableps are adapted to keep track of predators above them in the air and food below them in the water at the same time. Courtesy Paddy Ryan/www.ryanphotographic.com.

value-free approach to teaching, counseling, advising, or clinically treating another person. All interventionists frame their work in terms of their perspectives, beliefs, and values, even if they do not realize it. Working in a religious institution allows us to recognize that a moral framework influences our work and encourages us consciously to define and refine that framework to reflect the mission of the university.

The value-laden nature of clinical intervention is particularly evident to speech-language pathologists. We are always in a dilemma of sorts. We work with many children who have marked disabilities in communication, learning, and behavior. These children have persistent challenges that permeate every aspect of their lives. Communication problems associated with language impairment, autism, intellectual disabilities, and so on are multifaceted and pervasive. There may be literally hundreds of areas of difficulty within a single child. And here's the dilemma—even if we worked with these children every waking hour, every day of the week, for the rest of their lives, it is unlikely that we could ameliorate all of their difficulties—we could not make the disability go away. We can help children reach their potential, however, and that is important work. But the time we can spend with an individual child is very limited; clinical services are expensive and scarce. So, how do we spend that precious intervention

time? Where do we concentrate our efforts? How do we decide what would be the most effective approaches for an individual child? How do we determine which areas demand attention and which areas we can afford to let alone? Once we decide where to focus, how do we select the most appropriate methods and procedures? These kinds of decisions are all based on values. There is no purely objective ground on which we can stand—even if we wanted to. Our professional literature recognizes these practice issues, although they are rarely described as moral decisions. But discussions of best practice, efficacy of intervention, and evidence-based practice are replete in our professional discourse. We all want to know what matters and what works.

This is where the ability to be an academic anablep comes in. The ability to employ spiritual knowledge to frame more traditional ways of knowing greatly enhances our ability to tackle complex issues in human development and behavior. Spiritual insight provides a sound value system within which we can approach our work.

Let me offer a clinical example. Over fifteen years ago, we were designing a treatment program for a five-year-old boy with language impairment. Despite the fact that he was bright, that he came from a supportive home, and that he was anxious to communicate, his ability to understand and produce language was markedly impaired. He did not understand much of what was said to him, and he struggled to express his ideas and share his thoughts. Basically, at age five, he could not communicate nearly as well as a typical three-year-old. At the time, the traditional wisdom in our field dictated that we should direct our intervention focus on helping this child learn to produce and understand language structure. That is, we should facilitate his ability to learn the grammatical morphemes to put sentences together. But we had more pressing concerns than his immature sentence structure. This child's inability to communicate made it difficult for his parents to relate to him in the same way they did to their other children. The child did not like conversation, he could not share his feelings with his family, and he could not express his ideas. He could not explain what he had done that morning when his dad got home from work. He disliked print and avoided shared book reading with his mother. Our academic anablep view of this child pushed us to concentrate not on the form of this child's language, but on his ability to use what language he had to connect with his family. From a spiritual perspective, what could be more important than enhancing this child's ability to communicate with his parents? What would matter more than this from an eternal perspective? Wouldn't the ability to communicate in order to form family relationships be paramount? We consciously let this spiritual perspective guide our scholarly

perspective when we predicted that if we could enhance this child's ability to use language to relate to his family, he would have access to interactions and contexts that would facilitate the growth of his sentence structure.

In terms of treatment methods and approaches, we took a very LDS approach. We gave this child a journal. Yes, we gave him a journal despite the fact that he didn't talk or understand well, he disliked books, and he couldn't write. We then planned and carried out interesting events with him, and chronicled those events in the journal afterwards. To do this, we had the child tell us to the best of his ability about the events he experienced and we wrote down exactly what he said. Then we sent the journal home with him, and his dad read the day's entry with him in the evening.

Within a short period of time, this child took ownership of the journal. He loved dictating entries, and he would ask us to read and re-read the entries so that he could edit them—adding details and more complex forms. We have one lovely therapy segment on tape where a student clinician is writing the child's comments in his journal, and he takes the journal out of her hands and tries to write in it himself—even though he can't form letters. He looked forward to sharing his day's events with his dad in the evening; it provided a framework for more complex and meaningful conversations than they usually had. And yes, we observed the growth in sentence form that we had hoped for.

I think the journaling did something else for this child, something one could only appreciate with anablep eyes. Writing down the things that this child did emphasized the idea that his life, his actions, and his choices mattered—they were important enough to capture in print and reflect on later. Although he may not have been interested in books initially, he was fascinated by his own written story. And that led him to an increasing interest in the stories of others. This was a significant breakthrough for a child with his type and level of disability.

Our approach with this child was unconventional at the time—working within an institution where we could recognize and own the values that framed our decisions made it possible for us to try something innovative. Now, fifteen years later, the approach we took is common—it is considered sound practice. But we had to recognize that our spiritual perspective underlay and supported our empirical perspective in order for our approach to make sense at the time.

Just as our clinical work and teaching have been informed by our dual vision, our research has been guided by a similar perspective. I have worked on collaborative research with my husband and colleague, Martin Fujiki, for over twenty-seven years. We have many responsibilities, and our research time is limited. We desperately want to research the questions that

will lead to better interventions for children. This means that we must constantly evaluate the focus and nature of our research program. Through the lens of the value system of this university, we try to decide what research questions are important and how they can best be addressed. More than once, a research focus has crystallized during temple worship, and we have concluded: Here is an issue that matters in the lives of children. Let's chase it down. Let's find out more. I will say that the sometimes unconventional focus of our work has required us to exercise an annoying amount of rigor and care to place our work in the mainstream literature, but that too has been a refining experience.

In summary, I think a religious university is uniquely poised to articulate and promote a set of values within which scholars can frame their work. We do not lose or devalue what might be referred to as an empirical perspective or more traditional ways of knowing. We simply build from a spiritual scaffold. It's good to be able to see both above and below the water at the same time.

Bonnie Brinton is a professor in the Department of Communication Disorders. She served as Dean of Graduate Studies at BYU from 1999 to 2009. She is a fellow of the American Speech Language Hearing Association. Brinton received her PhD and BA degrees from the University of Utah in speech pathology and audiology. Her master's degree is from San Jose State University in the same field. She is an accomplished scholar and has published extensively in the area of speech-language pathology. She collaborates and publishes jointly with her husband, Martin Fujiki, also a professor in the Department of Communication Disorders. They are known nationally for their research on language impairment and social competence in children.



The Northwest Commission has tolerance and respect for a diversity of missions and evaluates each institution on the basis of its distinct mission. Photograph of BYU's Tanner Building atrium courtesy Brigham Young University Photography.

Tolerance, Diversity, and Community

The Role of Regional Accreditation

Sandra Elman

Good morning. On behalf of the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities, it is a pleasure to be with you this morning, although not in person. Certainly I am with you very much in spirit. I want to begin by thanking President Cecil Samuelson and Dr. Gerrit Gong for the opportunity to participate in this important event at Brigham Young University.

This is an event whereby Brigham Young University takes yet another significant step in reaching its fullest potential and maintaining its stature as an internationally recognized first-class university. The title of our session this morning is “Tolerance, Diversity, and Community,” three very complex notions, each of which indeed could be the focus of, at the very least, a daylong retreat.

The focus of my remarks is twofold. First, I will explicate the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities’ notions of diversity, tolerance, and community—notions that reflect and embrace the norms and values of our American academy. And second, I will set forth the commission’s expectations with regard to diversity, tolerance, and community as practiced in our accredited institutions of higher education.

Let me begin, if I may, with certain premises that pertain to accreditation granted by the Northwest Commission. First, the commission’s standards apply only to our institutions in the northwest region. These standards, though different in detail from other accrediting commissions, include similar criteria that reflect the principles of accreditation, including academic freedom.

Second, regional accreditation’s dual purposes, as many of you in the audience—my friends and colleagues who serve as evaluators for

the Northwest Commission—so well know, are quality assurance and continuous improvement.

Third, the evaluation system is based solely on peer review.

Fourth, the overarching purpose of the commission and regional accreditation is to protect the public interest. This is the *tour de force* of American regional accreditation, and this purpose remains strong and vibrant and perhaps is needed more today in this uncertain world than ever before.

Fifth, we the commission are created by you, our academic institutions, to ensure adherence to academic principles that undergird our American academy.

Sixth, and this is very critical and very pertinent to today's forum: regional accreditation is mission centered. The mission of the institution—in this case the mission of Brigham Young University—is the benchmark against which the commission evaluates each institution.

And seventh, regional accreditation commissions historically have upheld two fundamental constructs that reflect our American democratic traditions and our decentralized system of higher education. These constructs are institutional autonomy and academic freedom.

One defining characteristic of regional accreditation in the northwest region is the diversity of the institutions we accredit. Our seven states include Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Alaska, and the great state of Utah, as well as one candidate institution in British Columbia. Each of our institutions is unique, with its own distinct character and mission and its own distinct subthemes of that mission. Applying the same set of standards, the commission accredits public and private institutions, community colleges, four-year liberal arts institutions, research universities, comprehensive institutions, specialized institutions with a single or dual programmatic focus, religious-affiliated institutions, and tribal colleges. Within our universe of accredited institutions, therefore, as you have just heard, is a range of missions, a diversity of missions. The commission has tolerance and respect for these missions, and we evaluate each institution on the basis of its distinct mission.

Our new accreditation model, which will be applicable to member institutions in 2011, begins with standard one, which focuses on mission and goals, and purposefully ends with standard five, which addresses mission fulfillment. The commission and our community of higher education institutions recognize that the diversity of our institutions reflects the diversity of student needs, the diversity of student interests, as well as the diversity of societal needs. We are an academic community that has made the case to our representatives on Capitol Hill and to those officials

in the federal government that one size does not fit all in America's system of higher education. Various types of institutions with their different missions allow higher education in our country to be the engine for innovation, for creativity, and for the generation of new knowledge. And this has been our pride and our honor for centuries.

Let us turn now more specifically to the commission's expectations with regard to diversity, tolerance, and community. First, the commission expects our institutions to embrace and uphold the norms and values of our American academy, which include fostering intellectual inquiry and assuring academic freedom.

Second, our evaluative processes focus on the performance of the institution as a whole. We do not evaluate a particular faculty member's performance or lack thereof. We expect the institutions to have policies and procedures in place to do that. We count on the institutions to ensure that there is individual academic freedom.

But here I must add a caveat: ensuring academic freedom does imply tolerance for different perspectives, but it does not imply giving license to individuals to act in an arbitrary and capricious way. Within a community, there need to be checks and balances. As academic institutions, we have a responsibility to provide students with various bodies of knowledge and theories to provide them a truly liberal education—and I say "liberal" now not in the sense of liberal versus conservative, but liberal education in the sense of liberal studies—to paraphrase the commission's eligibility requirement number eleven, its standard for faculty, and its policy 9.1.

Let me share with you what the commission expects in this area. The commission expects that the institution's faculty and students are free to examine and test all knowledge appropriate to their discipline or area of major as judged by the academic educational community in general. Regardless of institutional affiliation or sponsorship, the institution needs to maintain an atmosphere in which intellectual freedom and independence exist. Intellectual freedom does not rule out commitment; rather, it makes it possible and personal. Freedom does not require neutrality on the part of the individual or the educational institution—certainly not toward the task of inquiry and learning, nor toward the value systems that may guide them as persons or as institutions.

From my perspective as president of the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities, I maintain that the defining and distinctive characteristic of our American higher education system and higher education in the northwest region is the diversity of our institutions. That diversity is our strength, and that diversity has kept us alive and well and prosperous. Brigham Young University has embraced and can continue to

effectively embrace the principles of accreditation and continue to meet our standards for accreditation and related policies while concomitantly fulfilling the university's distinct mission and goals, which include ensuring academic excellence, encouraging meaningful engagement in the generation of new knowledge, and fostering a climate of intellectual inquiry that reflects America's time-honored value of exploring and examining different bodies of knowledge to create a learning environment that gives homage to America's quest to be a truly learned society.

As our faculty engages in this intellectual inquiry, my hope, my expectation, is that individuals will always do so with civility and not vanity. To be part of our great academic American enterprise is not a right but a responsibility. We recognize that the most potent force for ensuring tolerance lies not with the commission but with the highly qualified, competent faculty at Brigham Young University and at all our accredited institutions who embrace the norms and values of the academy as faculty and as Americans.

We together, all of us, are responsible for maintaining the integrity of our institutions, academic integrity, and the integrity of regional accreditation, which allows institutions and not the government, with all due respect, to chart our future destiny. I commend President Samuelson and his colleagues for providing this venue today for reflection, for introspection, and for Brigham Young University to engage in continuous improvement and to ensure that it is meeting its highest goals and its distinctive mission. I thank you for this opportunity to be with you via distance but in spirit today.

Sandra Elman is the President of the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities in Redmond, Washington. She is the past chair of the Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions (CRAC), which is comprised of the presidents and chairs of the seven regional accrediting commissions. Prior to assuming the position of president in 1996, Elman was the associate director of the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges. Before joining regional accreditation, she held a variety of administrative and faculty positions at the University of Massachusetts, the University of Maryland, and the University of California, Berkeley. She has published extensively in the fields of public policy and higher education and is coauthor of *New Priorities for the University: Educating Competent Individuals for Applied Knowledge and Society Needs*. She is an adjunct faculty member at Oregon State University and is a past chair of the board of trustees of Unity College in Maine. Elman received her BA degree in history and political science from Hunter College in New York and her MA and PhD degrees in policy, planning, and administration from the University of California, Berkeley.

Poetry, the Other, and BYU

Tolerance and Diversity within Our Campus Community

Natalie Quinn

I am an English major with a guilty confession to make: until the latter part of high school, I hated poetry. I had always liked reading and writing, but for some reason I struggled to appreciate poetic expression with its subtler meaning and nuanced interpretations. I found poetry altogether frustrating and hard to decipher. I could not understand it, so I avoided it.

During my junior year of high school, the subject of my honors English class was American literature, and my teacher was Mr. Ben Gordon. Our course of study was chronological, so we began by reading the works of early explorers, colonists, and religious leaders and moved forward from that point on through the decades and centuries. Mr. Gordon delighted in challenging what we students thought we knew or understood about literature; he liked to make us think. Consequently, his class was both engaging and frustrating. When we arrived at the mid- to late-nineteenth century, he assigned us to read Walt Whitman's poetry. Given my longtime dislike of poetry, I was unenthusiastic about the assignment, and my apathy increased as I struggled to grasp what Whitman was trying to say with his long, convoluted lines of free verse that lacked recognizable metric patterns or a rhyme scheme.

I remember one particular night when I was up late trying to wade through some sections of "Song of Myself." My mother was staying up with me. She had been an English major and loved poetry, so she took it upon herself to help me love poetry, too. She sat by my side at the kitchen counter and lovingly read with me the sections I had been assigned, helping me pick apart the meaning of the lines—the imagery, the diction, the power of Whitman's thoughts. She became quite emotional as she pointed out to me these features of the poem, and before long I found that my eyes were also

filling with tears: I was so touched by the beauty of this poem—a beauty I had not previously seen or appreciated. Suddenly, I found myself opening my mind and my heart to these ideas that I had previously refused to acknowledge or value because they were foreign or hard to understand. Suddenly, I found myself loving poetry.

Fast forward a few years to my time as a college student. I had chosen English as my major and was enrolled in a class on literary theory. It was in this class that I first learned about Emmanuel Levinas and his philosophical ideas relating to the Other. Levinas teaches that we can transcend ourselves and our limited knowledge or understanding only by acknowledging and validating the existence of the Other. His philosophies promote a sense of responsibility and obligation that invites individuals to step outside themselves.

Levinas's ideas about the Other provide a perfect basis on which to build a community that is tolerant and diverse. To people outside of our campus community, BYU does not seem very diverse; rather, because most members of the BYU community are LDS, BYU seems homogeneous. However, this is not the case. BYU students, faculty, and employees come from all over the country and even from all over the world, and there is an incredible diversity of backgrounds, interests, and experiences among these community members. These individuals have had experiences and developed diversity through their participation in missions, study abroad programs, on-campus service initiatives, and other worthwhile organizations and programs. Their lives and endeavors exemplify Walt Whitman's exclamation in his poem "Give Me the Splendid, Silent Sun": "O such for me! O an intense life! O full to repletion, and varied!"¹

If there is any homogeneity at BYU, it is a homogeneity that we believe extends well beyond the bounds of the university's campus to include and encompass the whole world. We believe that we are all children of God, that we have the same Heavenly Father and therefore have an obligation to treat one another with love and respect, or with charity, which is the Christian theological version of Levinas's philosophical concept of acknowledging the Other. As we charitably and respectfully acknowledge the Other, we can promote tolerance and diversity within our campus community. I learned as a junior in high school that being willing to open one's heart and one's mind to that which is unfamiliar or unknown—to the Other—can be incredibly enriching and rewarding. As we embrace the possibilities of our responsibility to the Other, we have the opportunity to learn and grow. Unsurprisingly, I think some lines from Elizabeth Barrett Browning's poem "Aurora Leigh" express my feelings most effectively:

Earth's crammed with heaven,
And every common bush afire with God;
And only he who sees, takes off his shoes.²

We too can learn to see the heavenly beauty crammed into our world and into the people around us; we too can learn to appreciate the unique fire that burns in every object and individual with whom we come in contact; all we have to do is take off our shoes.

Natalie Quinn is originally from New Canaan, Connecticut, and was a senior at BYU (English major, Spanish and editing minors) when she presented this paper. Although she loves her Connecticut home, a part of her heart actually lives in Japan, where she served her mission. She is the second of six children, five of whom have been or currently are BYU students. She loves BYU and, as an undergraduate, delighted in participating in the Honors Program, traveling to London and Spain with study abroad programs, presenting at regional and national conferences, learning at the feet of exemplary professors and professionals, working as a Writing Fellow and TA, playing intramural flag football, and forming lasting, meaningful relationships with peers and mentors. She is currently a graduate student in the English MA program at BYU.

1. Walt Whitman, *Leaves of Grass* (Philadelphia: David McKay, 1990), 264.

2. Elizabeth Barrett Browning, *Aurora Leigh*, ed. Margaret Reynolds (New York: Norton, 1996), 238.

Acknowledging Differences While Avoiding Contention

Renata Forste

As Dr. Elman noted, one of the compelling strengths of higher education in the United States is the diversity across institutions. Diversity within institutions of higher learning can also be a strength. Speaking on why diversity in higher education matters, Lee C. Bollinger, president of Columbia University, said:

The experience of arriving on a campus to live and study with classmates from a diverse range of backgrounds is essential to students' training for this new world, nurturing in them an instinct to reach out instead of clinging to the comforts of what seems natural or familiar. We know that connecting with people very—or even slightly—different from ourselves stimulates the imagination; and when we learn to see the world through a multiplicity of eyes, we only make ourselves more nimble in mastering—and integrating—the diverse fields of knowledge awaiting us.¹

At the institutional level, BYU's statement on fostering an enriched environment notes that "it is the University's judgment that providing educational opportunities for a mix of students who share values based on the gospel of Jesus Christ and come from a variety of backgrounds and experiences is an important educational asset to BYU."² Diversity is also valued at the college and department level. For example, one of the program objectives for the undergraduate sociology degree is instruction in the "diversity of social life, the origins of inequality, social conflict, and the relations of power in modern society."³ As sociology faculty, we consider it essential that students be prepared to work in a diverse workforce and to serve in an international church.

So, how do we as faculty help students prepare to interact in a diverse world? How do we help students acknowledge differences while avoiding

contention? If diversity matters, and if we want students to succeed in a global environment, then, I would suggest, we need to start with our own BYU community. I don't think we can prepare students to succeed outside the university if we cannot show tolerance for differences within BYU. Can we really expect students to be respectful in a diverse world once they graduate if we do not model respect and tolerance for differences within our own institution? So, what can we do at BYU to help prepare students for life in a diverse world?

First, students should be aware of both the positive and negative aspects of strong group identification. In my introductory sociology course, students read about how group identification can generate a sense of belonging and loyalty—and also how it can create feelings of superiority. This can produce group rivalries and, if taken to an extreme, can lead to discrimination and hatred. Strong identification with members of an in-group is the basis for many gender, racial-ethnic, or religious divisions. Group favoritism can lead to biased perceptions. Following a double standard, we sometimes view the traits of our in-group as virtues, while we see the same traits as vices in out-groups. For example, men may view an aggressive man as assertive, but an aggressive woman as pushy. A religious group may perceive their opposition to other groups as “taking a stand,” but define opposition toward themselves as harassment. “To divide the world into ‘we’ and ‘they’ poses a danger for a pluralistic society. . . . One consequence of biased perception is that harming others can come to be viewed as justifiable.”⁴

The BYU experience helps foster strong in-group identification. We want students to feel they belong and to be loyal to their faith, but we don't want strong identification to lead to feelings of superiority or self-righteousness. We need to encourage loyalty but not superiority, critical thinking but not arrogance.

Second, students need greater awareness of diversity within the United States—political, socioeconomic, family, and religious background—as well as diversity within BYU. Diversity, at BYU, you may ask? As Natalie noted, unlike state schools, our students come from all across the United States and about 6 percent of our student body is international. In addition, many of our students have lived abroad as missionaries or as students and speak a second language. However, in addition to geographic diversity, I think we also have a wealth of perspectives among the members of the BYU community that we can appreciate and learn from. Those of us who are LDS share a testimony of Jesus Christ and the Restoration and strive to be temple worthy, but our social, political, or academic views need not agree. We do not even agree on every point of Church doctrine.

BYU's policy on academic freedom supports this diversity:

It is not expected that the faculty will agree on every point of doctrine, much less on the issues in the academic disciplines that divide faculties in any university. It *is* expected, however, that a spirit of Christian charity and common faith in the gospel will unite even those with wide differences and that questions will be raised in ways that seek to strengthen rather than undermine faith. It is also expected that faculty members will be sensitive to the difference between matters that are appropriate for public discussion and those that are better discussed in private.⁵

Third, we need to foster a spirit of tolerance on campus. My sense is that we can do a better job of appreciating diversity and modeling tolerance at BYU. There is an undercurrent of intolerance among faculty at times: if faculty members lean to the left politically or socially, for instance, then their testimony is questioned; if they lean far to the right, then their intellect is questioned. Rather than being intolerant and confrontational, we should be willing to listen and respect differences of opinion—and we can begin among ourselves.

Fourth, we need to avoid feelings of superiority. One place to start is to recognize when feelings of superiority become part of our group identification. President Hinckley stated, “We must cultivate tolerance and appreciation and respect one another. We have differences of doctrine. This need not bring about animosity or any kind of holier-than-thou attitude.”⁶ Now, he was speaking specifically about differences across faiths, but I believe his counsel also applies to differences within our own religious community.

I have a *Bizarro* cartoon by Dan Piraro that I keep as a reminder in my Relief Society materials. It shows Peter at the pearly gates interviewing a man before allowing him to enter: Peter says, “You were a believer, yes. But you skipped the not-being-a-jerk-about-it part.”⁷ I think it is essential that within our community we as faculty model the importance of believing without being a jerk about it. When we think that we have all the answers, that our perspective is the only perspective, that our view is the only true way, then we become intolerant and arrogant. We need to teach students to be critical thinkers, but not self-righteous or prideful, and to acknowledge and respect difference without contention.

We can model academic humility and acceptance by being respectful of everyone on campus and acknowledging the importance of each contribution to the university community. Having a PhD shouldn't lead to arrogance and the treatment of staff or students as second-class citizens. Unfortunately, there are faculty who treat secretaries or staff on campus

as inferior, almost as servants, rather than as equals or as partners in the education effort.

Fifth, we need to teach students how to disagree respectfully. We model tolerance when we are able to respectfully agree to disagree among ourselves; we must be civil in our interactions. President Hinckley said, "Each of us is an individual. Each of us is different. There must be respect for those differences. . . . We must work harder to build mutual respect, an attitude of forbearance, with tolerance one for another regardless of the doctrines and philosophies which we may espouse. Concerning these you and I may disagree. But we can do so with respect and civility."⁸

I had a colleague, now retired, with whom I had fundamental differences. In our department meetings and discussions about problem students, he would always stick up for the underdog. His emphasis was always on showing mercy. I, on the other hand, believe in "tough love." From my perspective, it was better to flunk or dismiss students who were underperforming. We disagreed, but we had mutual respect for each other, and by openly sharing our views with civility, we were able to make decisions as a department that generally tempered justice with mercy.

Finally, we can develop the ability to learn from those who are different or with whom we disagree. We can teach students to be open to new ideas without feeling that their group identity is being threatened. I have a colleague who teaches an introductory sociology course to freshmen, and he finds that generally these students are socially and politically conservative. To encourage critical thinking, he starts the semester by telling students that his intention is not to change their view but to give them new or additional information. He asks them to be open and willing to evaluate their own conclusions in light of new information. They may still come to the same conclusions in the end, but they will have done so in the context of new information or after evaluating alternative perspectives. Such an approach encourages openness, but in a nonthreatening way.

Elder Ballard notes, "All of our interpersonal relationships should be built on a foundation of mutual respect, trust, and appreciation. . . . Indeed, we may find that our philosophical differences add flavor and perspective to our relationships, especially if those relationships are built on true values, openness, respect, trust, and understanding. *Especially* understanding."⁹

To encourage tolerance, let us start with diversity in our own community—and let's remember the "not-being-a-jerk-about-it part." A Latin maxim quoted in the academic freedom statement says it best: "In essentials let there be unity; in non-essentials, liberty; and in all things, charity."¹⁰

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3. "Program Objectives and Learning Outcomes," Sociology Department, Brigham Young University, http://learningoutcomes.byu.edu/#college=HC3r2qmK9h2_&department=56wlnQoDK1oO&program=FEP2QUq18xqf.

4. James Henslin, *Sociology: A Down-to-Earth Approach* (New York: Pearson, 2009), 137.

5. "Statement on Academic Freedom at BYU," Faculty Center, Brigham Young University, September 14, 1992, <http://fc.byu.edu/opages/reference/academicfreedom.htm>.

6. Gordon B. Hinckley, "The Work Moves Forward," *Ensign* 29 (May 1999): 5.

7. See *Houston Chronicle* Comic Strip Archive, January 26, 2007, <http://www.chron.com/apps/comics/showComick.mpl?date=20070126&name=Bizarro>.

8. Gordon B. Hinckley, *Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1997), 661, 665.

9. M. Russell Ballard, *Our Search for Happiness: An Invitation to Understand The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1993): 5, quoted in M. Russell Ballard, "Building Bridges of Understanding," *Ensign* 28 (June 1998): 62.

10. "Statement on Academic Freedom at BYU."

Individual and Institutional Academic Freedom¹

James D. Gordon III

Academic freedom is essential in higher education. Academic freedom has two dimensions: individual academic freedom and institutional academic freedom.

Individual Academic Freedom

Individual academic freedom involves the freedom of an individual faculty member to teach, to research, and to speak as a citizen. The concept of individual academic freedom came to the United States from the German universities. The rationales for individual academic freedom are that scholars should be free to pursue truth and to transmit truth to students and that students should be free to learn. The most important statement on academic freedom in the United States is the 1940 statement of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP). It provides, "Academic freedom is essential . . . and applies to both teaching and research. Freedom in research is fundamental to the advancement of truth. Academic freedom in its teaching aspect is fundamental for the protection of the rights of the teacher in teaching and of the student to freedom in learning."²

At the opening of the J. Reuben Clark Law School in 1973, BYU President Dallin H. Oaks cited the importance of exposure to a variety of viewpoints. He said:

The curriculum and manner of instruction in the J. Reuben Clark Law School should approach the law from a scholarly and objective point of view, with the largest latitude in the matters being considered. The law is an adversary profession. . . . It is uniquely important that its students be exposed to all rational points of view on every question worthy of study. Failure to provide this kind of training would put our graduates

at a significant disadvantage when they meet the opposing arguments—as they will—in the crucible of the adversary process of negotiation, litigation, and the formulation of legislative and administrative policy. Students of the J. Reuben Clark Law School must therefore be expected to study and master what they may well choose never to advocate. If that principle is clearly understood, it will save a great deal of misunderstanding on the part of our students and those who anxiously watch their instruction.

Yet despite the latitude that must be allowed for instruction in this law school, there are fundamental principles on which there is no latitude. We expect to have a vigorous examination of the legal principles governing the relationship between church and state under the Constitution, but no time for debate over the existence of God or man's ultimate accountability to Him. There is ample latitude for examination of the responsibilities of a lawyer who is prosecuting or defending one of crime, but no room for debate over the wrongfulness of taking a life, stealing, or bearing false witness.³

Institutional Academic Freedom

Institutional academic freedom is the freedom of a college or university to pursue its mission and to be free from outside control. The Supreme Court and other courts have repeatedly recognized institutional academic freedom, which is grounded in the free speech clause of the First Amendment. Universities advance and communicate knowledge, and therefore the free speech clause protects them from governmental interference in academic matters.

The Relationship Between Individual and Institutional Academic Freedom

At all colleges and universities, a tension exists between individual and institutional academic freedom. While individual academic freedom is essential to a university's mission, it is not unlimited. A college or university mission includes educating students and advancing knowledge. Some expression that injures or fails to advance the university mission is not protected.

To pursue their missions, all institutions of higher education place some limits on individual academic freedom. In general, colleges and universities have at least six categories of official limitations on individual academic freedom. They are: (1) the curriculum; (2) the academic discipline; (3) institutional judgments about grading; (4) institutional judgments about the quality of teaching and scholarship; (5) hate speech; and (6) religious expression.

First, the curriculum is a limitation, and this limitation involves judgments about course content and germaneness. The institution may determine what material should be covered in a course. A course fits into a curriculum, and the institution and students rightfully expect that students who take the course will obtain certain knowledge and skills necessary to succeed in higher-level courses or after graduation. The institution may determine not only the course content, but also the teaching methods to be used.

The second limitation is the academic discipline itself. Isaac Kramnick and R. Laurence Moore have observed that “disciplines are disciplines because they don’t encourage every point of view.”⁴ This limitation can present difficult issues, because the disciplines are not value-free.

The third limitation involves institutional judgments about grading. The courts have upheld requirements that faculty members adhere to the universities’ grading policies and standards.

Fourth, institutional judgments about the quality of teaching and scholarship impose limits on academic freedom. These qualitative judgments are based on certain conventional standards and values. A professor who disagrees with those standards and values will find that his or her own approach is not protected by academic freedom.

The fifth limitation involves restrictions on hate speech, including racist and sexist speech. A number of universities have adopted harassment policies that prohibit expression that harasses or demeans others because of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, or disability.

The sixth limitation relates to religious expression. For example, state universities typically prohibit the advocacy of religious viewpoints by faculty in the classroom to maintain a separation between church and state. Some religious colleges and universities also have limitations regarding religious expression. Consequently, both secular and religious colleges and universities have limitations related to religion. At many secular colleges and universities a professor cannot teach that God exists, and at some religious colleges and universities a professor cannot teach that God does not exist. The differences in those freedoms are in part what attracts some faculty members and students to secular universities and others to religious universities. For instance, 88 percent of BYU faculty responding to a survey said that they have more freedom to teach their subject matter in the way that they feel is appropriate than they would have at other universities.⁵

Every college or university places some limitations on individual academic freedom to protect the school’s institutional mission. George Worgul has observed that “‘academic freedom’ at any university . . . is never unlimited or absolute. Every university has an identity and a mission

to which it must adhere. . . . Freedom is always a situated freedom and a responsible freedom.”⁶

Institutional Academic Freedom at Religious Colleges and Universities

Many religious colleges and universities have a mission to provide an education that is consistent with the ideals and principles of the sponsoring religion. Religious colleges and universities have the institutional academic freedom to pursue their distinctive missions. This freedom is protected by both the free speech clause and the free exercise clause of the First Amendment.

The AAUP’s 1940 statement on academic freedom recognizes the right of religious colleges and universities to place limitations on individual academic freedom to preserve their religious mission and identity. The “limitations clause” of the 1940 statement provides, “Limitations of academic freedom because of religious or other aims of the institution should be clearly stated in writing at the time of appointment.”⁷

Accreditation standards also recognize both individual academic freedom and the right of religious colleges and universities to protect their mission. For example, the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities states that an institution must foster and protect academic freedom for faculty.⁸ It also affirms, “The institution’s faculty and students are free to examine and test all knowledge appropriate to their discipline or area of major study as judged by the academic/educational community in general. Regardless of institutional affiliation or sponsorship, the institution maintains an atmosphere in which intellectual freedom and independence exist.”⁹ The Northwest Commission also recommends that the institution “publish candidly any reasonable limitations on freedom of inquiry or expression which are dictated by institutional mission and goals.”¹⁰

Conclusion

Both individual and institutional academic freedom are essential for colleges and universities. Individual academic freedom involves the freedom of an individual faculty member to teach, to research, and to speak as a citizen. Institutional academic freedom is the freedom of the institution to pursue its mission and to be free from outside control. Both dimensions of academic freedom are important, and both need to be understood and respected.

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1. These remarks are largely based on James D. Gordon III, "Individual and Institutional Academic Freedom at Religious Colleges and Universities," *Journal of College and University Law* 30, no. 1 (2003): 1-45.

2. "1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure," in American Association of University Professors, *AAUP Policy Documents and Reports*, 10th ed. (Washington, D.C.: American Association of University Professors, 2006), 3; accessible online at <http://www.aaup.org/AAUP/pubsres/policydocs/contents/1940statement.htm>.

3. Dallin H. Oaks, "Opening Remarks," in Founding Documents (August 27, 1973), 14, accessible online at http://www.law2.byu.edu/law_school/foundingdocumentsnew/.

4. Isaac Kramnick and R. Laurence Moore, "The Godless University," *Academe* 82 (November-December 1996): 23.

5. Keith J. Wilson, "By Study and Also by Faith: The Faculty at Brigham Young University Responds," *BYU Studies* 38, no. 4 (1999): 175.

6. "Editor's Preface," in George S. Worgul Jr., ed., *Issues in Academic Freedom* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1992), ix.

7. "1940 Statement."

8. Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities, Standard 4.A.7, <http://www.nwccu.org/Standards%20and%20Policies/Standard%204/Standard%20Four.htm>.

9. Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities, Eligibility Requirement 11, <http://www.nwccu.org/Standards%20and%20Policies/Eligibility%20Requirements/Eligibility%20Requirements.htm>.

10. Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities, Operational Policy A-8(c)(2), <http://www.nwccu.org/Standards%20and%20Policies/Operational%20Policies/Policy%20A8/Operational%20Policy%20A8.htm>.



Academic excellence can and does exist at Brigham Young University, not in spite of its religious underpinnings but because of them. Photograph of BYU's Hinckley Alumni and Visitors Center courtesy Brigham Young University Photography.

Questions I Ask Myself

President Cecil O. Samuelson

At the outset, let me thank each of you for being with us at this conference. In my judgment, it has been an important morning for Brigham Young University and I hope for each of you as well. I especially want to thank our special guests, Dr. Hibbs and Dr. Elman, for their contributions today. Of course, I am also grateful to the Planning Committee and also to members of our own BYU community for the insights and observations they have made as well. As always, I am grateful to my President's Council colleagues Gerrit Gong and John Tanner for all they do generally and specifically for their involvement with this conference and their effective efforts to advance inquiry, scholarship, learning, and teaching at this very unique and wonderful university.

If you will tolerate a few moments of personal privilege as I begin my comments today, I will confess to you that for virtually all of my life I have lived with the notions that faith and learning, questions about life and help from heaven are all part of a consistent whole. My mother and father were people of great faith and religious devotion but were also not afraid to ask or pose questions about almost everything. My mother was an elementary school teacher in her early years and never deserted that role with her five children. My father was a college professor with an impressive teaching and publication record and was very secure in both his professional and religious convictions. Consequently, I learned early at their knees that both preparation and prayer were important ingredients in academic and other kinds of success. I learned by their example to expect that achievement was much more likely if prayers were focused on proper preparation rather than leaving results entirely at the mercy of faith.

Some of you have heard about this experience before, and I am still teased about it to this day. When I was an undergraduate student stressing mightily over the prospects of being admitted to medical school, I fell in love with Sharon and convinced her that she should marry me—the best decision and most successful endeavor of my life. She was teaching school, but I was still in my junior year. We decided that we would be married over the Thanksgiving holiday weekend so that we might have a couple of days of honeymoon before returning to school. I was taking an embryology class, which was viewed as the key course in determining medical school admission. Consequently, knowing that I would not be studying much over the honeymoon weekend, I was uncharacteristically well prepared for the examination to be given the Monday following Thanksgiving. My professor, a kindly man who knew of my circumstances, told his TA—a close personal friend of mine—that because I had been doing rather well in the course, he would throw out my test, which I was almost certain to fail. We got married on Wednesday morning, I went to class that afternoon, we had a reception that evening, and then we went off for a couple of days on our honeymoon. I arrived for my test on Monday, and to the surprise of everyone, especially myself, I got a perfect score. The price for that success is still being paid! Since then, however, I have continued to be a strong advocate for the notion of prayer in the process of thorough preparation.

While I was at Duke University in the 1970s, there was a national debate about prayer in the schools and whether or not it was appropriate and legal. I remember hearing on television an interview with a member of the U.S. Congress who, when asked his opinion on the debate, answered, “Well, whatever laws we make, as long as the teachers give math tests, there will be prayer in the schools!”

To briefly summarize, then, I am one who believes strongly that inquiry, scholarship, learning, and teaching have an important place in a culture that also includes serious religious values and practices. While this association of values can occur in many places, I would submit that a community such as Brigham Young University is an ideal setting for such to be found.

We are grateful to have been joined by President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and Vice Chairman of the Brigham Young University Board of Trustees. While he was not able to be with us this morning, we appreciate very much that he has arrived before we conclude this session and has agreed to make some remarks before we conclude. He is a very remarkable individual who for a number of reasons gives unique value, great support, and perspective to BYU.

First, in his role in the First Presidency and as one of the officers of our board, his opinions, encouragement, and counsel mean a great deal to us. His academic background is singular. After obtaining his doctorate at Harvard, he became a tenured faculty member at the Stanford University business school and then served as president of Ricks College, now BYU–Idaho. On two occasions, he has been the commissioner of the Church Educational System and has worked closely with several BYU presidents in their interactions with the board of trustees. He understands inquiry, scholarship, learning, and teaching in the broader sense but also the unique dimensions of these endeavors in a religiously affiliated and supported institution of higher education such as BYU. We are always grateful to have him with us.

Not having been a student at BYU or a faculty member at this or a similar private university prior to assuming the presidency, I arrived having a number of questions about the topics related to today's conference. It occurred to me that in the few minutes allotted to my presentation I might mention some of these questions and my musings about them. Perhaps I can also share some conclusions or understandings that I have gained about them. Some very important issues have already been addressed and explicated with great skill and insight. I hope you have also had some of your queries treated and your understanding enlarged. Time will not allow me to be comprehensive in either the topics covered or the explanations advanced. Hopefully, some of what I say might provoke your further thinking and assist you in improving your understanding of the very broad dimensions of inquiry, scholarship, learning, and teaching, particularly at BYU.

Question 1: Why has support from the Church, financially and in all other ways, been so consistently generous and even dramatic when the trend at almost all religiously related institutes has been to the contrary?

As a general officer of the Church, I knew long before assuming my current position that BYU is very important to our sponsoring Church leadership. I had some ideas why this might be so, and I am sure they have occurred to you as well. What has become increasingly clear is the answer to the question many have had about the consistent, generous support from the Church, since there are so many other places where the Church might productively use its sacred funds. I believe the fundamental answer to this query lies in our doctrine.

Question 2: Why do we believe continuous learning by study and also by faith is fundamental and achievable for everyone?

Those familiar with our religious tradition will recognize that we believe continuous learning by study and also by faith is fundamental and achievable for everyone. Why should this be so? We believe that God has a plan for each of us and that plan includes the importance of learning to make proper choices in our lives and then execute them and live with the decisions we have made. We believe, as taught by Brigham Young—our founding namesake—and others of our prophet leaders, that all learning in whatever field or endeavor comes in part through the blessing and grace of God, whether or not we choose to acknowledge that source. Of course this assertion does not lessen the importance of serious individual effort but rather reinforces it. We believe that all people of whatever time, place, or circumstance are literally spirit children of God and thus endowed with a divine potential to learn, improve, and contribute over the life span and beyond.

Question 3: Can real, serious, consequential inquiry and learning occur in a place that puts so much credence on faith in the Almighty?

Someone hearing these things for perhaps the first time might appropriately ask this question. Our answer is a resounding “Yes!” with the explanation that academic excellence can and does exist at Brigham Young University, not in spite of its religious underpinnings but because of them. As President Eyring once put it to the BYU student body, “You are under mandate to pursue—not just while you are here, but throughout your lives—educational excellence.”¹

I could mention much evidence for this assertion of academic excellence. The external ratings of various programs, departments, and schools are impressive. The large numbers of our baccalaureate graduates who are successful in acceptance to doctoral programs and professional schools place BYU in the top ranks of all American universities. Time does not permit more on this point, except to emphasize our belief that faith is not an excuse or alternative to excellence in learning and teaching but rather a vital partner in quests for even better learning and teaching, scholarship, and inquiry. Faith is not an excuse for academic mediocrity. Rather, it gives reason and substance to the notions of excellence and striving for excellence in scholarly pursuits that include inquiry and research, learning, and teaching. Stated another way, our faith cannot be a crutch but is a powerful incentive for us to become the best we can be.

This does not excuse pride, a condition found all too commonly in the academy. Rather, a thoughtful and analytical faith, which we espouse, is a powerful source of humility, constantly reminding all who have such faith that each has so much more yet to be learned than the relatively small body of knowledge and understanding currently mastered. This guard against pride also helps us appreciate how important it is to recognize what it is that we do not know about so many things.

Question 4: What about those who have trouble seeing both sides of the question?

Because of the sometimes contentious and polarizing attitudes that exist between some who consider themselves to be the guardians of religious faith on one hand and others who advocate exclusivity for the scientific method or its equivalence in their particular scholarly discipline on the other, false dichotomies or artificial boundaries are too often created. We believe that such exclusive allegiances are not only unnecessary but unwise and untrue. In fact, such rigidity leads to stultifying learning and inquiry because, as a symptom of such unjustified pride, the notion that one already knows enough impedes listening, thinking, asking, testing, studying, and pondering. Acknowledging the God-given potential of all people colors in a very positive way the attitudes scholars can have not only in terms of development of their own personal scholarship but also the way they see and respond to their students and colleagues in their endeavors.

While we take our faith and our religion very seriously and believe that inspiration and revelation can and do come from God, we also believe that science and secular inquiry and learning are not only valid but necessary and essential to increase understanding and expand knowledge. We hold that science and religion are not enemies and that they only become so when someone purports that religion makes science unnecessary or when science becomes one's religion. In the end, these extreme positions, found rather too commonly in our larger society, impede the progress and understanding that those really serious about inquiry, scholarship, learning, and teaching must have. Such polarized postures are the stuff of both poor science and insufficient theology.

Question 5: How do I deal with honest questions that seem to avoid straightforward answers?

We are grateful for our faith, which does not require that we believe anything that is not true. Likewise, our faith gives us the comfort that answers eventually can and will come when appropriate attitudes and

effort are in place, but that they will rarely be on our timetable or anyone else's. In the meantime, we are anxious to continue to question, study, learn, and remember that many of the conclusions we and others reach are only tentative and currently best explanations of the limited data we have so far been able to accumulate. Meanwhile, we strive to gain greater clarity and understanding.

Question 6: What are the characteristics of great learners?

In this context, then, of advocating for the advantages of continuous learning "by study and also by faith" (D&C 88:118), let me share some characteristics or descriptions of great learners as described by President Eyring in his message to our students more than a decade ago. These might be framed as questions, even though President Eyring did not construct them as such. In his listed characteristics are found many of the answers to the queries that have occurred to me and to others as they have thought about this unique institution. He, like most of us, has observed and known some great scholars. See if you agree with the patterns that he describes.

Said he, "The first characteristic behavior is to welcome correction."² This, of course, also means a willingness to share thoughts and questions and then listen with humility that acknowledges even the best and brightest don't know it all or always get it right. They seem to have an excitement about new insights even when the new perspective has been provided or shared by others.

"A second characteristic of great learners is that they keep commitments. Any community functions better when people in it keep their promises to live up to its accepted standards. But for a learner and for a community of learners, that keeping of commitments has special significance. That is why we sometimes describe our fields of study as 'disciplines.'"

In my own field, we call the rules of inquiry the scientific method, but in every field, there are rules to be followed. President Eyring then continues:

What all disciplines have in common is a search for rules and a commitment to them. And what all great learners have is a deep appreciation for finding better rules and a commitment to keeping them. That is why great learners are careful about what commitments they make and then keeping them. . . .

There is a third characteristic you have seen in great learners. They work hard. . . .

You will notice that the learners who can sustain that power to work hard over a lifetime generally don't do it for grades or to make tenure at a university or for prizes in the world. Something else drives them. For some it may be an innate curiosity to see how things work.

For [those] who [have] enough faith in [God's] plan . . . to treat it as reality, hard work is the only reasonable option.

A fourth characteristic described by President Eyring is that “great learners help other people.” While we will acknowledge that some great learners are selfish, the general notion is still sound. Many marvel that so many BYU undergraduates are involved in meaningful inquiry that leads to significant publications for them in peer-reviewed journals and national presentations. We believe our remarkable BYU mentoring program is a natural outgrowth of our doctrine and the great learners who populate this faculty.

The fifth characteristic mentioned by President Eyring is that “the great learner expects resistance and overcomes it.” He used the example of Thomas Edison and his many, many failures to find a suitable filament for the electric light bulb before finally being successful. Like Edison, persistence in sustained inquiry and scholarship is almost always necessary for real accomplishment in academics and is supported by the scriptural description of most learning being line upon line, precept upon precept. When we remember that the great plan for all of us is composed of various kinds of difficulties and tests, then we recognize that learning of the greatest value almost always comes with a high price.

Question 7: What is the greatest difference you see between Brigham Young University and other universities with which you are familiar?

I brought this question with me to BYU, and in some variation it is still frequently posed to me from those outside our community. I could mention several significant differences such as the remarkable and substantial financial support of our board of trustees that allows us to operate with great stability year in and year out with tuition levels far below comparable institutions and without incurring the debt that is so common elsewhere. I could discuss the tremendous credentials of our remarkable student body and mention that, in spite of the multiple choices almost all of them have with respect to admission to other outstanding universities, four out of five who apply to BYU enroll here. Some people are surprised to learn that a very high percentage of our faculty finish their academic careers at BYU, regardless of when they joined the faculty or what other great university they have come from. Each has her or his own reasons, but one particularly resonates for me.

On a very personal note, I have found more academic freedom for myself at BYU than at any other institution where I have served, learned, or visited. I remain loyal to and appreciative of the influential people who helped and taught me, as well as the wonderful experiences and opportunities I have

enjoyed elsewhere. For me, however, this is the first time I have felt completely free to speak my mind openly about my faith and how it has shaped my attitudes and interests in my academic efforts in medicine and science. This is not to say that I could not be myself at another university, but it is to state that I am grateful to be able to acknowledge my belief and experience that what I have learned in science as well as in theology has come by serious study and also by sustaining faith.

All institutions have constraints in what responsible people say and teach. While not always a fan of what some describe as political correctness, I always understood the wisdom of not being too critical of the legislature when employed at a state institution. Presidential colleagues at other private institutions frequently describe, and often lament about, the troubling sensitivities they feel in dealing with influential board members and major financial donors.

Make no mistake, at BYU we are also guided by our honor code to which each faculty member, student, and employee has subscribed in writing. There is an important balance between individual and institutional academic freedom, which again for us has its roots in our doctrine. Individual agency and personal responsibility are twin pillars deeply planted in our religious beliefs and practices. It is this mutual respect and regard for each person and the principles on which this institution was established that so wonderfully enrich this special environment for consequential inquiry, learning, scholarship, and teaching.

All of these things and many more could be shared, but the most impressive difference to me is that almost uniformly with the faculty, staff, administration, and students, we have a community whose primary loyalty is to the mission of Brigham Young University and secondarily to their own disciplines and careers. This is the case not only with those who are members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints but also with those of other faiths as well.

Lest anyone believe I have exhausted all of my questions, let me assure you that this is not so. When President Gordon B. Hinckley, as chairman of our board of trustees, gave me his formal charge at my inauguration, he said I was to help BYU become the best it could be. Candidly, I still do not know fully what this means, but I know who he is and I know he was serious. I think daily of his direction and often of the prophecies and predictions of his predecessors and now his successor, President Thomas S. Monson. I work very hard to make sure their general guidance and aspirations help frame our specific and proximate decisions and emphases. Since we cannot do everything at BYU, what we do focus our energies and resources on is very

important, and learning, inquiring, scholarship, and teaching in the right ways form the fundamental basis of why we are here.

Thank you for your critical roles and contributions in helping Brigham Young University along its path to becoming what this marvelous university is now and yet will become.

Cecil O. Samuelson began his work as the twelfth president of Brigham Young University on May 1, 2003. President Samuelson is a Salt Lake City native who served at the University of Utah as Professor of Medicine, Dean of the School of Medicine, and Vice President of Health Sciences. He holds a bachelor of science degree, a master's degree in educational psychology, and a medical degree from the University of Utah. He fulfilled his residency and held a fellowship in rheumatic and genetic diseases at Duke University Medical Center in Durham, North Carolina. Samuelson has received numerous scholastic honors and is the author or coauthor of forty-eight original publications, eight books or chapters of books, and thirteen abstracts. He has also served as a director, officer, or member of several national medical and hospital organizations. He and his wife, Sharon Giaque Samuelson, have five children and twelve grandchildren.

1. Henry B. Eyring, "A Child of God," BYU Devotional Address, October 21, 1997, available online at <http://speeches.byu.edu/reader/reader.php?id=2940&x=65&y=5>.

2. For this and all subsequent quotations, see Eyring, "A Child of God."



The Doe Library at the University of California, Berkeley, is built in the Neoclassical Revival style. Courtesy University of California, Berkeley.

Beehive and Portico

John S. Tanner

In the introduction to these conference proceedings, Gerrit Gong recalls with fondness his experiences at his second alma mater, Oxford. I have similar fondness for my second alma mater, UC Berkeley. I spent most of my time there in two grand buildings at the center of campus, Wheeler Hall and the Doe Library. One does not find at Berkeley Oxford's lovely dreaming gothic spires or its enclosed colleges, each with its own chapel, or students riding bikes to exams in academic robes. All these bespeak the monastic origins of Oxford and remind us that the university grew out of the medieval church. The campus architecture at Berkeley points to another origin of the university. It is built in the Neoclassical Revival style with an architectural vocabulary intended to recall the origins of the academy in Athens. Indeed, the center of campus, which includes a Greek theater, was deliberately conceived to convey the message that Berkeley is the Athens of the West.

I spent my days haunting the halls of Berkeley's Greek-inspired temples of learning. I particularly loved to study in the magnificent Reading Room of the Doe Library, whose vast, vaulted, light-filled space functions as a sort of cathedral where acolytes in pursuit of wisdom sit in quiet concentration. I delighted in the ornately fretted ceiling of the Reference Room, engraved with the names of worthies of science, literature, and art—like a pantheon to the gods of secular learning.

Only one building of Brigham Young University, my undergraduate alma mater, resembles the great edifices of UC Berkeley. This is the Maeser Building, which was also built in the Neoclassical Revival style and during exactly the same decade as its counterparts at UC Berkeley. The Maeser Building was also originally planned as part of a neoclassical core

of campus. It was to anchor a classical quad at the entrance to the university as one approached BYU from town. Its vocabulary was intended to recall values associated with classical civilization, such as order, harmony, wisdom, culture, learning, authority, and tradition. It was a little Greek temple on what was known as “Temple Hill,” where BYU’s founders hoped the Church would someday erect an LDS temple to complement what they regularly referred to as “temples of learning” on campus.

As a freshman, I lived in the shadow of the Maeser Building in a house on the brow of “Temple Hill.” Often I studied on its porch and on its grounds. Later, as a faculty member, I taught Honors Western Civilization courses in the Maeser, discussing the very values and traditions that BYU’s little Greek temple was meant to invoke.

The Maeser Building, however, includes one feature utterly unlike anything one can find in the neoclassical architecture of UC Berkeley. Above the Doric columns of the portico, capping the original front porch of campus, sits a carved stone beehive. This was intended to be a prominent feature of the building as one approached upper campus from the west, the way BYU was originally laid out. A symbol of Deseret, it served as a visible reminder of BYU’s pioneer past and LDS identity.

This juxtaposition of a beehive atop a classical entablature serves as a visual reminder of BYU’s dual heritage from Athens and Jerusalem. It thus forms a fitting image for a symposium about inquiry, scholarship, and learning and teaching in religiously affiliated colleges and universities. The neoclassical design reminds us that BYU belongs within a venerable academic tradition stretching back to antiquity. We have inherited from ancient Athens and medieval Europe the very idea of a university just as we have inherited the elements comprising the Maeser Building’s neoclassical design. Likewise, the beehive reminds us that BYU also belongs within a specifically LDS tradition. We are the beneficiaries of founders who, out of their poverty and through their industry, established a house of learning in the desert at the behest of prophets and inspired by belief that God expects members of the Church to seek learning “by study and also by faith,” for “the glory of God is intelligence.”

As BYU entered its second century, Spencer W. Kimball, then President of the Church, reminded the faculty at BYU that they “have a double heritage which they must pass along: the secular knowledge that history has washed to the feet of mankind with the new knowledge brought by scholarly research—but also the vital and revealed truths that have been sent to us from heaven.” It is our duty, President Kimball continued, to become fully “bilingual,” speaking with “authority and excellence” the language of scholarship while becoming deeply “literate in the language of



The Karl G. Maeser Building, on the brow of “Temple Hill,” with its Doric columns and carved stone beehive, symbolizes BYU’s dual heritage.

spiritual things.”¹ For these reasons, BYU takes seriously both the beehive and the portico.

Some doubt that religious universities can truly integrate their dual heritage. These doubts are not new. Long ago, Tertullian famously quipped, “What indeed has Athens to do with Jerusalem? What concord is there between the Academy and the Church?”² This posture can result in intellectual and spiritual fragmentation between the sacred and secular, reason and revelation—with zealots on either side of the divide, each inclined to dismiss the claims to knowledge by the other. For many, if not most, of those associated with religiously affiliated colleges and universities, including almost all of us who are participating in this symposium, such separation between Athens and Jerusalem would constitute a limitation and loss. For us, a religiously affiliated university like BYU does not limit inquiry but enables it, precisely because it opens intellectual and cultural commerce between Jerusalem and Athens. The overarching theme of these conference proceedings has been integration—its possibilities and promise, as well as its perplexities and pitfalls. This theme is present from Dr. Thomas Hibbs’s opening presentation to the concluding remarks by Presidents Samuelson and Eyring. Overwhelmingly, the participants recognize something precious and powerfully appealing about being able to connect professional preoccupations with ultimate concerns, which Paul Tillich called faith³—connecting discipline with discipleship.

There is a deep satisfaction—indeed wholeness—for disciple scholars and students in being able to integrate domains in which they feel so passionately and fully invested. For we are “academic anables,” to use Dr. Bonnie Brinton’s memorable metaphor; convinced of what Professor Hibbs calls “the unity of truth”; capable of living with apparent contradiction in the confidence that God “does not require us to believe anything that is not true,” as President Samuelson says, paraphrasing President Eyring’s father; comfortable pursuing truth by reason and revelation in a Greek temple crowned by a beehive.

BYU, alas, did not continue to build in the Neoclassical Revival style. Few now study and teach in the Maeser Building on the far end of campus. But in a deeper sense, we all live in its extended shadow. The tradition of the beehive and portico continues in our practices. This is evident every week in the way the campus transforms classrooms into chapels and back again. This transformation never fails to move me. I recall as a student blessing the sacrament in the same classroom in which I studied geology. There, where I learned about dinosaurs and the age of the earth, I also made covenants with the God of Creation. Likewise, I was bishop of a ward that met in a room with a periodic table on the wall and in which the sacrament bread was laid out on a counter next to Bunsen burners. On Sundays, students assembled in dresses and ties in rooms where they wore Levi’s on weekdays; they laid scriptures on desks where they placed their textbooks for class. Such is the legacy of a beehive atop a portico.

John S. Tanner has served as Academic Vice President of Brigham Young University since June 1, 2004. Prior to this, he served as Associate Academic Vice President in two previous BYU administrations, as well as chair of the English Department. He received a BA in English from BYU in 1974 (magna cum laude and Highest Honors), and a PhD from the University of California at Berkeley in 1980. He was an assistant professor at Florida State University before coming to BYU, where he holds the rank of Professor of English. He has also been a Senior Fulbright Lecturer in Brazil. Dr. Tanner is the recipient of several teaching awards, along with other academic honors. He has taught undergraduate and graduate courses in literature, composition, religion, and the history of civilization. John Tanner is married to Susan Winder Tanner. They are the parents of five children and grandparents of twelve.

1. Spencer W. Kimball, “Second-Century Address,” *BYU Studies* 16, no. 4 (1976): 446.

2. Tertullian, *The Prescription against Heretics*, trans. Peter Holmes, available online at http://www.tertullian.org/fathers2/ANF-o3/anfo3-24.htm#LOC_P3709_1244728 (accessed June 15, 2010). Quotation in chapter 7.

3. Paul Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1957), 1.



“The Vision That You Have . . . Augurs Well for the Development of Still Better Things”

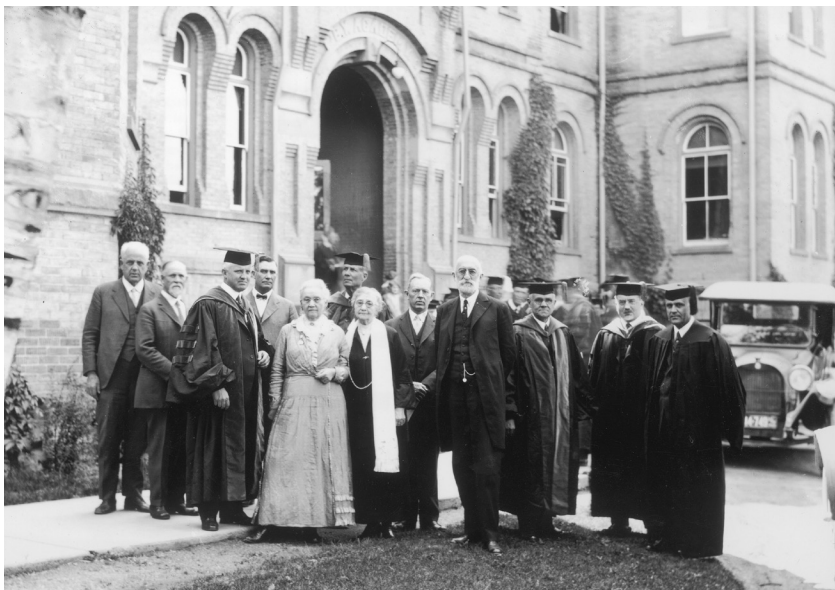
The Role of Accreditation in Securing the Future of Brigham Young University, 1921–1928

J. Gordon Daines III

In 1921, Franklin S. Harris was appointed president of Brigham Young University. During his first visit to campus, Harris articulated his vision for the future of the young institution. He said, “The President of the Church Commission of Education, and all who have anything to do with Church schools are determined to make this ‘the great Church University.’”¹ President Harris had a different vision about what it meant to be “the great Church University” than did his predecessors. While they had focused on the importance of teacher education, Harris believed that the institution needed to equip students with the skills to become leaders in the academy, the government, civic organizations, and the Church.² This was a radical reconceptualization of the role of Brigham Young University that would have a far-reaching impact.

President Harris recognized that if Brigham Young University were to truly become “the great Church University,” several things had to occur. He told the student body and faculty during his initial visit to campus, “We want to make this institution the greatest on earth. . . . We want more buildings, more equipment and a greater faculty; but first of all, we want to establish pre-eminent scholarship and leadership.”³ It is evident from his focus on scholarship and leadership that Harris was already envisioning the steps necessary for Brigham Young University to be recognized by the fraternity of colleges and universities.

As the first president of the university to hold a doctorate, Franklin S. Harris understood better than his predecessors what it meant to be officially recognized as a college or university. He had experienced firsthand the difference in quality between BYU and accredited schools in terms of the faculty, research opportunities, laboratory equipment, and physical



University officials with members of the board of trustees at commencement, 1920s. Franklin S. Harris was able to accomplish his goal of seeing the university accredited because he had the support of Church leaders—many of whom served on the board of trustees. Courtesy University Archives, Brigham Young University.

plant. He had also experienced the importance of being able to transfer credit from one institution to another—something not easily done by unaccredited schools such as Brigham Young University. Harris had completed his collegiate studies at Brigham Young University in 1907, and, after working at the Utah State Agricultural College for a year, had matriculated at Cornell University in 1908 to pursue a doctorate in agronomy. Upon completion of his doctoral degree, Harris had returned to the Utah State Agricultural College as a professor of agronomy. He quickly assumed leadership roles at the college and was even considered for the presidency of the Agricultural College in 1916.⁴

Accepting the presidency of Brigham Young University had not been an easy decision for Harris. He was well respected by his colleagues at the Agricultural College, and he enjoyed the work he was doing in agronomy. He was also concerned about the fact that BYU was a university in name only. Harris discussed the nature of the university with John A. Widtsoe and other trusted colleagues before deciding that Brigham Young University had the potential to become a real university.⁵ Harris came to BYU understanding that much needed to be done to realize this goal.

Harris spent the first few months of his presidency developing a plan to help the university achieve its potential and articulating the importance of leadership in this plan. Harris's focus on leadership resonated with Church leaders, including James E. Talmage, Heber J. Grant, and John A. Widtsoe.⁶ The importance of their support for Harris's vision was recognized by members of the Brigham Young University Board of Trustees. Susa Young Gates, a board member, commented in a letter to Harris, "I joy in the knowledge that you have Dr. Widtsoe, that great-visioned man, and President Heber J. Grant, the inspired Prophet of the Lord, behind you in all your plans and developments."⁷ Harris's educational ideas also found resonance with Elder David O. McKay.⁸ Harris didn't just articulate his vision of Brigham Young University's potential to Church leaders, but he also consulted with prominent Latter-day Saint scholars about how to improve scholarship on campus and how to create an academic structure that would meet the needs of a growing university.⁹ Toward the end of May, Harris began publicizing his plan with an article in the student



College class, ca. 1920. Brigham Young University was still struggling to find its identity as an institution of higher education in the early 1920s. It would take a reorganization of the university's academic structure and accreditation before the number of college students increased. These changes allowed enrollment to grow from approximately 400 students in 1920 to over 5,000 students in 1945. Courtesy University Archives, Brigham Young University.

newspaper, *White and Blue*, and explained the steps needed to enable BYU to reach its full potential. They included creating a strong library, improving the caliber of the faculty, establishing a research division to aid faculty with their scholarship, and developing an extension division to expand the services of the university. Harris was careful to point out that the growth of the university needed to be slow and steady so that it would last.¹⁰

President Harris had recognized early that in order to reach his vision Brigham Young University needed to be accredited. In 1921, the university still resembled its immediate predecessor, Brigham Young Academy, in structure and course offerings. The academy had been founded in 1875 as an educational institution dedicated primarily to elementary and secondary education. It had begun offering college-level courses in 1892 under the direction of President Benjamin Cluff Jr.¹¹ Although the academy changed its name to Brigham Young University in 1903,¹² by 1921 the institution still had a heavy focus on elementary and secondary education. For the 1920–21 school year, there were only 438 college students enrolled at the university. The college enrollment for 1921–22 was slightly higher at 666.¹³

THE DEVELOPMENT OF ACCREDITATION

Accreditation is a voluntary activity in the United States and has its roots in the Progressive Era's urge to associate. To this day, cooperative and voluntary relationships between institutions are an important part of the American higher education landscape. John R. Mayor has defined accreditation as "the recognition accorded to an institution that meets the standards or criteria established by a competent agency or association."¹⁴ The major purpose of accreditation is to ensure that institutions claiming to be colleges and universities meet accepted academic standards. The formation of accrediting associations was an attempt by colleges and universities to form cooperative relationships. The first national association of higher education was the Association of American Agricultural Colleges and Experiment Stations, and it was formed in 1887 to help the land-grant schools established by the Morrill Act of 1862 to obtain federal funding.¹⁵ Although the purpose of this association was limited, the potential of banding together as institutions was quickly recognized. Associations with the express purpose of establishing standards for admission to and the transfer of credit between colleges and universities soon began to develop.

Institutions voluntarily chose to participate in the accreditation activities of these new associations because "there [was] a large price to pay for those who [did] not [participate] in areas such as recognition by other organizations, public perception, and funding support."¹⁶ The way

accreditation developed in the United States is a direct result of how American higher education itself developed.

American higher education can trace its history to European predecessors. A brief discussion of some of the characteristics of those European predecessors is helpful in understanding how the voluntary nature of accreditation developed. The earliest known institutions of higher education emerged in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries in Europe. These institutions featured “that machinery of instruction represented by faculties and colleges and courses of study, examinations and commencements and academic degrees.”¹⁷ These early universities were “meeting places of students and masters drawn together by a common desire for learning.”¹⁸ To a remarkable degree, these early universities were “self-governing as well as self-respecting.”¹⁹ As these institutions matured and developed across Europe over the next several centuries, the concept of self-governance became extremely important. This model of self-governance was eventually transplanted to the New World and complicated the development of standards for measuring the educational offerings of colleges and universities in America.

From its inception in the seventeenth century, “American higher education has never been forced to conform to any one uniform pattern of organization, administration, or support.”²⁰ Each college and university established its own criteria for admission and graduation. These criteria were often direct reflections of the missions and purposes of their founders—typically religious organizations.²¹ Religious organizations were one of the major driving forces in the expansion of higher education in the United States.

Following the end of the Revolutionary War in 1783, the higher education system in the United States experienced phenomenal growth. The number of colleges grew from nine at war’s end to thirty-three in 1815. Twenty years later there were sixty-eight colleges, and by 1848 there were one hundred thirteen.²² This tremendous growth would only accelerate toward the end of the nineteenth century and resulted in the formation of accrediting associations in an effort to help standardize entrance requirements for colleges and universities and to facilitate admissions decisions.²³

These efforts were a direct response to the growing number of institutions calling themselves “colleges.” As early as 1870, the United States Office of Education had undertaken the task of publishing a list of recognized colleges. They defined a college as “any institution that was authorized to grant degrees and that had college students in attendance.”²⁴ The first list produced included 369 institutions. This was an astonishing number considering that the United States was less than one hundred

years old. It also represented nearly a tripling of the number of institutions of higher education in a little over twenty years. The report clearly demonstrated that there was little regulation of the institutions and that any institution wishing to call itself a college or university could do so. Accrediting associations, particularly regional ones, developed to fill this regulatory gap. They aimed “to promote good relations between secondary schools and higher institutions and to improve college admission standards and requirements.”²⁵ The first association to develop procedures for accrediting colleges and universities was the North Central Association in 1895.²⁶ It was followed by the first national association, the Association of American Universities, in 1900.

The Association of American Universities consisted of fourteen institutions that offered advanced or graduate studies.²⁷ Its major focus was “the conditions under which students might become candidates for higher degrees in American universities or might receive advanced credit in one institution for work done in other institutions.”²⁸ It was also interested in ensuring that American students hoping to study in German universities would be able to have the work they completed in American institutions recognized overseas. The association achieved this aim in 1905 when the faculty of philosophy at the University of Berlin agreed to “recognize the bachelor’s degree of American universities as the equivalent of the German Gymnasium’s *Maturitätszeugnis*, but only if taken at a member institution of the association.”²⁹

The Association of American Universities was further interested in defining, and defending, what it meant to be a university. The founders of the association agreed with most academics, who felt that a university was “a complex institution including liberal studies for the bachelor’s degree, a faculty committed to research, and training of advanced students in research and preparation for the professions.”³⁰ They believed “it was not simply the doctorate and graduate study that needed protection. The very name *university* was at risk. Under the multiple chartering practices of states, territories, and (notoriously) the District of Columbia, that name had been given in response to nothing more than considerations of convenience or high institutional ambition. Now interested persons could at least inquire whether or not a certain university belonged to the AAU.”³¹ The Association of American Universities was the only accrediting association that operated nationally, and it continued to accredit undergraduate institutions into the 1940s. In 1948, a proposal was made to the organization to expand its accrediting function to graduate institutions. This proposal was considered by the organization’s governing body and soundly rejected. By early 1949, the decision was made to get out of the business of accreditation entirely.³²

Other associations also began developing accrediting procedures in the early twentieth century. These associations typically had a regional geographic focus. These regional associations had similar aims to the Association of American Universities and the North Central Association. They fully intended to define and defend what it meant to be a college or a university according to their constituencies. These associations included the Southern Association in 1917, the Middle States Association in 1919, and the Northwest Association in 1923.³³

All of these associations developed accrediting procedures that had four major components: (1) the establishment of accreditation criteria, (2) the inspection of candidate institutions by authorities to ensure that they met these criteria, (3) the publication of a list of institutions passing inspection, and (4) the periodic review of member institutions to ensure that they continued to meet the accrediting criteria over time.³⁴ Institutions listed on the accredited lists of the regional associations and the Association of American Universities were recognized as peers of other accredited institutions, with the same rights and privileges. Accreditation helped define whether an institution was a college or a university and facilitated the transfer of students between institutions—particularly for the purpose of graduate study.

HARRIS PURSUES ACCREDITATION

Franklin S. Harris and the faculty of Brigham Young University understood that the first step to becoming the “great Church University” was for BYU to be accredited by the Association of American Universities or one of the regional associations. In August 1922, with the blessing of the university community, President Harris began a letter-writing campaign to four accrediting associations. They were the American Council on Education, the University of California, the Northwest Association of Secondary and Higher Schools, and the Association of American Universities.³⁵

American Council on Education

President Harris began his campaign with a letter to the American Council on Education. In his letter, Harris asked about “the steps that must be taken by an institution such as ours to be considered for a place on the accredited list.”³⁶ The director of the American Council on Education, Samuel P. Capen, wasted little time in responding to Harris’s request for information. Capen explained to Harris that the American Council on Education was not a formal accrediting body and that it served to coordinate the activities of institutions of higher education. He also informed Harris that “Brigham Young University could not, unless the

Council should change its rules, become an institutional member until it is accredited by the University of California or by some regional association functioning in the area in which the University is situated, as the North Central Association does in its part of the country.”³⁷ Brigham Young University needed to be accredited by one of the regional associations before it could be placed on the American Council on Education’s list of accredited schools.

University of California

Acting on Samuel Capen’s suggestion to seek accreditation from the University of California, President Harris’s secretary, Kiefer Sauls, sought contact information by writing to Wilford J. Merrill of the Utah State Agricultural College. He noted, “The papers of a few days ago reported the placing of the Utah Agricultural College on the University of California’s accredited list. I wonder if you could give me the name of the official in California to whom correspondence should be addressed regarding the accrediting of this institution.”³⁸ Upon receiving the desired information, President Harris wrote to A. O. Leuschner in April 1923. He asked for “information as to what it is necessary for an institution to do in order to become accredited, since I wish to make application on behalf of the Brigham Young University.”³⁹

President Harris’s letter was forwarded to Charles B. Lipman, Dean of the Graduate Division at the University of California, who responded in early August 1923. Lipman’s response was far from positive. Lipman wrote, “There being so few students who come here from your institution as graduate students we do not feel that we are in a position to go to the considerable cost, financial and otherwise, of a full review of the conditions for study and the curricula at the Brigham Young University. We deem it best to consider every case on its own merits and, therefore, shall continue to do so until other arrangements can be made.”⁴⁰ Harris was not pleased with Lipman’s response and wrote to Adam S. Bennion, superintendent of Church schools and then a student at the University of California, asking him to “stop over and see Dr. Lipman, as there is really no sense in the world in their not putting us on their list. The work that we do for the undergraduate is so much better than that done in the mammoth universities that this holding of us up seems to be without rhyme or reason.” Harris was convinced that “there would be no doubt about our being put on their list” if Dr. Lipman “understood the situation here.”⁴¹ Harris fired off another letter to Dr. Lipman on September 8, in which he wondered why “our students should be given a lot of unnecessary inconvenience

in taking up graduate work at the University of California.” Harris even offered to pay for any costs associated with reviewing Brigham Young University for accreditation.⁴² Dr. Lipman replied to President Harris’s letter in late September with a long list of reasons why the University of California would not accredit Brigham Young University. He pointed out that Brigham Young University’s admission requirements were not as stringent as the University of California’s; that the library was extremely limited; that credit was offered for theology for missionary work, which was “contrary to anything which we have at this institution”; that there wasn’t a clear distinction between upper-level undergraduate courses and master’s degree courses; and that the number of freshmen on campus did not create the “proper atmosphere in which to prepare students for graduate work.” Dr. Lipman closed his letter by assuring Harris, “I will do everything I can to give a full measure of recognition to all the work which is done at your institution.”⁴³

Dr. Lipman’s criticisms hit home. Harris was most concerned by the references to admissions requirements and the caliber of the library. Brigham



A corner of the university library in the Education Building, ca. 1913. The university library was housed in cramped quarters at the beginning of Franklin Harris’s presidential administration. These cramped quarters were the source of deep concern for both library staff and accrediting agencies. The situation began to improve in 1925 when the Heber J. Grant Library was completed and occupied. Courtesy University Archives, Brigham Young University.

Young University did have less stringent admissions requirements than the University of California—particularly with regard to conditional students. Students could be admitted to the university as conditional students if they could “present . . . an official transcript of credits that they [had] completed 13 units of approved high school work,” and if they registered for sufficient secondary work, they could become regular students within one year.⁴⁴ This was one of the things that had concerned Harris when he was asked to become president of the university. Lipman’s criticism of the library was also accurate. The library was housed in an overcrowded room in the Education Building and contained less than twenty thousand volumes. Early in Harris’s presidential tenure, the Library Committee had complained that “the librarian and her assistants are embarrassed because of insufficiency in library space and insufficient shelf room to place the books that the institution is daily receiving.”⁴⁵ Lipman was also correct that there was no clear distinction between upper-level undergraduate and master’s degree courses.

Harris recognized that the points Dr. Lipman had made were accurate, and the matter seemed dead. In spite of his efforts, the University of California continued to decline to accredit Brigham Young University and continued to cause “unnecessary inconvenience” to those students who desired to pursue graduate work in the University of California system.

In January 1924, Harris received a letter from Dr. Lipman indicating that a representative of the Association of American Universities would be coming west in the next several months and suggesting that Harris contact the association about having Brigham Young University inspected.⁴⁶ Harris was pleased to respond to Dr. Lipman, saying, “I wish to thank you for your letter of January 16, in which you call attention to the committee on inspection of the Association of American Universities. Several months ago the committee wrote saying they would like to send a representative here and we arranged for this at the time so we expect Dr. Robertson of the University of Chicago to be here for the Association as soon as he can make the rounds.” Harris also pointed out that Brigham Young University had successfully been accredited by the Northwest Association of Secondary and Higher Schools and that it was now on the accredited list of the American Council on Education.⁴⁷

Northwest Association of Secondary and Higher Schools

Following the rejection by the University of California, Harris turned his full attention to receiving accreditation from the Northwest Association of Secondary and Higher Schools (hereafter the Northwest Association).

Harris struggled to find someone who could give him information on becoming accredited by the Northwest Association.⁴⁸ His original letter requesting information about accreditation was directed to Leonard V. Koos, who referred him to W. M. Kern. On September 5, 1922, Harris wrote W. M. Kern and was told to contact Philip Soulen. Harris then wrote Philip Soulen on September 8, 1922, and was relieved when Soulen replied on September 11, 1922. He informed Harris that he was indeed the secretary for the Northwest Association and that Harris's request for information had "been forwarded to Dr. Frederick Bolton of the University of Washington, Seattle, who is our examiner of colleges applying for affiliation."⁴⁹ Not wanting to take any chances, President Harris decided to write directly to Frederick Bolton. His mid-September letter included a request for information on becoming accredited by the Northwest Association as well as copies of Brigham Young University's annual catalog.⁵⁰

Brigham Young University's initial movement toward accreditation began with Frederick Bolton's September 19 response to President Harris. Bolton stated that he would "be glad to take steps to have the University inspected for the purpose of becoming accredited." However, Bolton also stated, "Just when it will be possible to inspect your institution I cannot say."⁵¹ Harris conveniently ignored this statement in his reply, expressing enthusiasm that the Northwest Association was willing to consider accrediting Brigham Young University. Harris wrote, "We shall be glad to have you come at any time that is most convenient for you, either next week or the period in October you spoke of."⁵² Harris and Bolton eventually agreed that Bolton would come to examine the university in early October.

Bolton's decision to apply the Northwest Association's accreditation procedures to Brigham Young University pushed the organization outside of its geographic boundaries. The Northwest Association had been established to serve the states of Idaho, Washington, Oregon, and Montana. Realizing that the Northwest Association's bylaws did not preclude admitting institutions from outside the Northwest region, Bolton decided to review Brigham Young University's application to be accredited.⁵³

On October 7, 1922, Harris received a Western Union telegram informing the campus community that Frederick Bolton would "arrive about nine thirty [and] remain today only."⁵⁴ Harris and the faculty would have one day to convince Dr. Bolton that Brigham Young University deserved to be accredited as a college. They were successful in their efforts. President Harris was able to report to Adam S. Bennion, superintendent of Church schools, in late October, "Several weeks ago we were visited by an inspector, Dean Bolton of the University of Washington, representing the Northwest Association of Secondary and Higher Schools. He was

very highly pleased with the institution and said he would unqualifiedly recommend us for entrance into the Northwest Association.”⁵⁵ In early November, this impression was confirmed when Bolton wrote, “I assure you that I enjoyed the day with you very much and I appreciate the many courtesies extended me by yourself and Mrs. Harris and members of your faculty.” He further stated, “I shall recommend that your institution be placed on the accredited list of the North West Association. Of course, I cannot guarantee that my recommendation will be followed but there is every probability that it will.”⁵⁶ In the same letter, Bolton enclosed an application for Harris to complete.

The application that Harris submitted to the Northwest Association was for accreditation as a college, not a university.⁵⁷ The association defined a college as an institution “with a four-year curriculum with a tendency to differentiate its parts in such a way that the first two years are a continuation of, and a supplement to, the work of secondary instruction as given in the high school, while the last two years are shaped more or less distinctly in the direction of special, professional, or university instruction.”⁵⁸ To meet the requirements for accreditation by the Northwest Association, Brigham Young University had to demonstrate that it met the following criteria:

1. A college should demand for graduation the completion of a minimum quantitative requirement of 120 semester hours of credit (or the equivalent in term hours, quarter hours, points, majors, or courses), with further scholastic qualitative requirements adapted by each institution to its conditions.
2. The size of the faculty should bear a definite relation to the type of institution, the number of students and the number of courses offered. For a college of approximately 100 students in a single curriculum the faculty should consist of at least 8 heads of departments devoting full time to college work. With the growth of the student body the number of full time teachers should be correspondingly increased. The development of varied curricula should involve the addition to further heads of departments.
3. The training of the members of the faculty of professorial rank should include at least two years of study in their respective fields of teaching in a recognized graduate school. It is desirable that the training of the head of a department should be equivalent to that required for the doctor’s degree, or should represent a corresponding professional or technical training. A college should be judged in large part by the ratio which the number of persons of professorial rank with sound training, scholarly achievement and successful experience as teachers bears to the total number of the teaching staff. Teaching schedules exceeding 16 hours per week per instructor or classes (exclusive of lectures) of more than thirty students should be interpreted as endangering educational efficiency.

4. The minimum annual operating income for an accredited college should be \$50,000, of which not less than \$25,000 should be derived from stable sources, other than students, preferably from permanent endowments. Increase in faculty, student body and scope of instruction should be accompanied by increase in endowment. The financial status of each college should be judged in relation to its educational program.

5. The material equipment and upkeep of a college, its buildings, lands, laboratories, apparatus and libraries and their efficient operation in relation to its educational progress, should also be considered when judging an institution.

6. A college should have a live, well-distributed professionally administered library of at least 8,000 volumes, exclusive of public documents, bearing specifically upon the subjects taught and with a definite annual appropriation for the purchase of new books.

7. A college should not maintain a preparatory school as part of its collegiate organization. If such a school is maintained under the college charter it should be kept rigidly distinct and separate from the college in students, faculty, buildings and discipline.

8. In determining the standing of a college emphasis should be placed upon the character of the curriculum, the efficiency of instruction, the standard for regular degrees, the conservatism in granting honorary degrees, the tone of the institution and its success in stimulating and preparing students to do satisfactory work in recognized graduate, professional, or research institutions.

9. No college should be accredited until it has been inspected and reported upon by an agent or agents regularly appointed by the accrediting organization.⁵⁹

These standards were regarded as “ideals stated as objectively as possible. They were considered as guides rather than inflexible rules no one of which could be violated without invalidating the entire set of regulations.”⁶⁰ Of these criteria, only three were firm. The institution had to “require for entrance, graduation from a secondary school of four years beyond the eighth grade,” it had to require “four years (120 semester hours or 180 quarter hours for graduation),” and it could not allow “secondary school students in the same classes with college students.”⁶¹

Brigham Young University had little difficulty in meeting the majority of the requirements for accreditation. The school required 183 quarter hours of credit for graduation,⁶² and the course catalog for 1922–23 lists over thirty departments.⁶³ The university received an appropriation of \$167,700 for the 1922–23 school year from the Church School Commission,⁶⁴ and it owned around \$30,000 of laboratory equipment, which was adequate for instructional needs. It also had about 30,000 bound volumes in the library.⁶⁵ The major issue for both the Northwest Association and

Frederick Bolton was the quality of the faculty. In 1922, the majority of the faculty held only a bachelor's degree. Only seven faculty members held a doctorate, and five of those faculty members had been recruited to the university by Harris during the previous year.⁶⁶ Harris had recognized early that strengthening the university's faculty was one of his most important tasks. He encouraged faculty to take sabbatical leaves to upgrade their educational qualifications,⁶⁷ stipulated that all new hires needed to have at least a master's degree, and initiated a campaign to hire faculty who held doctoral degrees.⁶⁸

Frederick Bolton recognized the potential of Brigham Young University and understood that Franklin Harris had put into place a plan that would enable the university to reach its potential. Bolton wrote to Harris, "You are already accomplishing excellent things and the vision that you have of the future augurs well for the development of still better things."⁶⁹ It was on the basis of this potential that Bolton recommended that Brigham Young University receive accreditation from the Northwest Association.



College of Arts and Sciences faculty, 1928. President Harris understood that the quality of a university is dictated by the quality of its faculty, and he established several programs to strengthen the faculty. One of the most successful was a leave program that allowed faculty members to continue their education. During the four years between 1924 and 1928, sixteen faculty members took advantage of the leave system with five completing doctoral degrees and eleven completing master's degrees. Courtesy University Archives, Brigham Young University.

Franklin S. Harris and the faculty of Brigham Young University had to wait five months to find out if the board of the Northwest Association of Secondary and Higher Schools would accept Frederick Bolton's recommendation. Word finally came on April 7, 1923, that the board had unanimously approved Bolton's recommendation and that Brigham Young University was now an accredited member of the Northwest Association. Bolton wrote to Harris, "It is with especial pleasure that I write you that the Northwest Association of Secondary and Higher Schools approved my recommendation that Brigham Young University be placed on our accredited list. I am sure that your University merits the recognition and will be a creditable institution in our group of approved institutions."⁷⁰

Association of American Universities

At the same time that Harris was waging a successful campaign to become accredited by the Northwest Association, he continued his efforts to get Brigham Young University accredited by the Association of American Universities (AAU).⁷¹ Harris was aware of the fact that the University of Utah had received accreditation from the Association of American Universities in 1922,⁷² and he understood that the AAU had a very strict definition of what it meant to be a university. In 1908, the Association of American Universities had defined a university as having "a creditable graduate school and, at a minimum, one professional school that required at least a year of collegiate work for admission, with the professional degree taking not under five years."⁷³ They had adopted the Carnegie Foundation's list of colleges in 1913, "including colleges barred from the Carnegie pension program only because of religious connections."⁷⁴ Harris was confident that Brigham Young University would meet the requirements for being accredited as a college by the Association of American Universities and hopeful that the institution would meet the requirements for a university.

On September 5, 1922, Harris wrote Kendrick C. Babcock, chair of the association's executive committee, asking for information on how Brigham Young University could become accredited by the AAU.⁷⁵ Babcock replied in late September by sending Harris a "memorandum of procedure advised for institutions seeking inclusion in the accepted list of the Association of American Universities."⁷⁶ In late October, Harris sent Babcock a packet of information to "assist your committee in adequately evaluating the work of the Brigham Young University."⁷⁷ Harris also mentioned that Frederick Bolton had visited campus earlier in the month representing the Northwest Association and that the visit had been very positive.

Harris waited six months for a reply from Babcock. In April 1923, Harris wrote, stating, "On October 30 I sent you facts regarding the Brigham Young University together with a letter of application to be included in the Association's list of accredited institutions. . . . I am wondering if it reached you and if there is anything further that should be done by the institution here."⁷⁸ He further informed Babcock that BYU had been accredited by the Northwest Association of Secondary and Higher Schools. Babcock replied to Harris's request for information, stating, "The application of Brigham Young University for inclusion in the accepted list of the Association of American Universities is still pending. No final decision was reached at the meeting in Baltimore in November."⁷⁹ He also informed President Harris that he was no longer chair of the Committee on Classification and that future correspondence should be directed to Adam LeRoy Jones.

In November 1923, Adam LeRoy Jones wrote President Harris to inform him that the Committee on Classification had recently decided to send David A. Robertson of the University of Chicago to visit Brigham Young University.⁸⁰ Jones also informed Harris that BYU would be responsible for the costs of the visit. Harris replied in early December that the institution was "glad to have Dean Robertson of Chicago inspect the Brigham Young University" and that he had already sent the check covering the costs to A. H. Lloyd of the University of Michigan.⁸¹

Dean Robertson visited BYU in April 1924 and issued his report to the Association of American Universities on May 1, 1924.⁸² Robertson's report was extremely thorough. It reviewed admission requirements and their administration, graduation requirements and their administration, the faculty and their educational qualifications, the finances of the institution, the physical facilities, the library, the laboratory equipment, the curriculum, and the graduates and their accomplishments (particularly as related to graduate education).⁸³ Given the positive tenor of Robertson's report, Harris was cautiously optimistic that the Committee on Classification would accredit Brigham Young University.

President Harris and the BYU community were deeply disappointed to receive Adam LeRoy Jones's letter in late May indicating that "the Committee decided to postpone action for the present." Jones listed several reasons why the committee was not prepared to accredit the institution. They included the facts that the course catalog listed "a good many courses which were not actually given," that the number of conditional students was too great, that the faculty's qualifications were inadequate, and that "the laboratory expenditures were hardly adequate to the number of students receiving laboratory instruction."⁸⁴ These were some of the same

criticisms that had been leveled by Charles Lipman of the University of California and Frederick Bolton of the Northwest Association, and the university was already working to correct them. Harris responded vigorously to the Committee on Classification's decision. He wrote Jones in



Top: Aerial view of upper campus, 1929; *bottom:* Lower campus, 1929. When Dean Robertson visited Brigham Young University in 1924, the university's campus was split between upper and lower campus. The majority of instruction took place on the lower campus. It would not be until the 1950s that upper campus became the focus of the university. Courtesy University Archives, Brigham Young University.

June, explaining that the course catalog had been adjusted to reflect only the courses offered, that the issue of conditional students had been dealt with, that the issue of faculty qualifications was “gradually being cared for,” and that the institution was working to improve its laboratory expenditures. Harris also stated, “We have here a much better institution than it is thought to be by people who are not acquainted with the real service it renders.”⁸⁵ Harris clearly felt that the Committee on Classification had not taken the true measure of Brigham Young University. He was mollified a little by Jones’s response to his letter. Jones wrote, “The Committee will, I am sure, be interested to know of the progress which you are making and will hope, at some no distant date, to be able to consider favorably a renewed application from Brigham Young University.”⁸⁶

After taking his time to digest Robertson’s report and to carefully consider the Committee on Classification’s decision as well as Jones’s response to his letter, Harris wrote David A. Robertson in July 1924 to commend him “on the very comprehensive statements which you have made. I believe it to be absolutely fair in every respect and to explain our situation here in a clear way.” Harris also took the opportunity to argue that Brigham Young University should receive accreditation from the Association of American Universities. He wrote, “I feel we have the things necessary for giving first class under-graduate courses,” and “our under graduates should not be in any sense penalized. As a matter of fact our individual students are receiving the fullest consideration and after they attend an advanced institution all their credits are being accepted.”⁸⁷ Harris clearly was not ready to concede defeat. His letter to Robertson sparked an interesting conversation about how Brigham Young University was attempting to meet the accreditation standards of the Association of American Universities.

Robertson wrote Harris in September, asking for more information to use in strengthening his report to the Committee on Classification. “Will you be good enough to let me know of any improvement in library, laboratory or personnel? I shall present my report finally to the Committee on Classification at its meeting early in November.”⁸⁸ Harris was more than happy to comply with Robertson’s request. He wrote back stating, “In August the Church Board of Education appropriated money for the construction of a thoroughly modern library building on University Hill. . . . The building will not only house the library but will furnish additional class and office room.” He further informed Robertson that the university had become the new home of the Deseret Museum and its natural history collections, that the catalog had been adjusted to reflect the courses actually offered, that several faculty members were working to improve their qualifications, that the university’s entrance requirements

had been strengthened, and that the physical facilities of the institution had been improved. He also mentioned that the university's financial position was stronger than had been stated in the first draft of Robertson's report due to the fact that an endowment given to the university by Jesse Knight had not been included.⁸⁹ Harris hoped that this additional information would tip the scales in favor of Brigham Young University. Unfortunately, it was not enough for the Committee on Classification to take immediate action.

Harris would spend the next several years working vigorously to improve the qualifications of Brigham Young University. In the late fall of 1925, four years into his presidency, Harris put together a report entitled "A Program for the Brigham Young University." The report was prepared at the request of Adam S. Bennion, superintendent of Church schools, and outlined the steps that President Harris felt needed to be taken to put the university on a more solid footing. It also reflected the inadequacies that had been highlighted by the Association of American Universities' decision to not accredit Brigham Young University. The report highlighted the progress made in improving the university and enunciated a plan for future development. It underscored what Harris recognized as the university's greatest needs—needs that had to be met before his goal of having the



Physics laboratory on lower campus, 1904. The laboratory equipment available to students and faculty was barely adequate for instructional purposes. Much of it was old and in serious need of replacement. Unfortunately, the limited financial resources of the university prevented this situation from improving until the 1940s. Courtesy Universtiy Archives, Brigham Young University.

institution accredited by the Association of American Universities could be realized. Those needs were “(1) An improved faculty, (2) More adequate scientific equipment, and (3) More books in the library.”⁹⁰

The most pressing problem was improving the quality of the faculty—a problem Harris had recognized in 1921 and had already begun to deal with. Harris targeted faculty recruitment as the best place to start and initiated efforts to ensure that new faculty would meet the standards of the accrediting associations. This meant that all new faculty members should “hold at least a master’s degree.”⁹¹ As mentioned previously, Harris realized that the qualifications of the existing faculty needed to improve as well, and he established a sabbatical program to allow them to upgrade their educational qualifications.⁹² Both of these programs proved very successful in raising the caliber and educational background of the faculty.

The problem of adequate scientific equipment was one felt keenly by President Harris, a scientist himself. Although Dean Robertson had declared that “the equipment is adequate,”⁹³ Harris worked diligently and creatively to improve the quantity and quality of scientific equipment available to students and faculty. In his “Program for Brigham Young University,” Harris pointed out that “the modern institution must have the apparatus of the modern world.” He strongly suggested, “The next half dozen years should see large sums spent to bring the departmental equipment up to standard.”⁹⁴ Later in the report he pled with the Church Board of Education to increase the university’s annual appropriation to the institution from \$200,000 a year to \$300,000 a year in a gradual manner over six years. Harris felt that an “increase of this magnitude would make it possible gradually to bring the department equipment up to where it should be” as well as ensure that the university could continue to improve its physical facilities and the quality of its faculty.⁹⁵ Unfortunately, the Church’s poor financial position did not permit an increase to the university’s appropriation for most of the 1920s and 1930s.⁹⁶ This meant that President Harris had to scrounge for additional funding for laboratory equipment—which remained “adequate” rather than improving.

Strengthening the library had been one of the main goals of the university from the beginning of Franklin S. Harris’s administration. Harris felt “the library is the heart of a University,”⁹⁷ and he realized that Brigham Young University would never be successfully accredited as a college, let alone as a university, without a strong library. Harris began his efforts by petitioning the Church Board of Education for funds to build a library building. He was delighted to learn in August 1924 that funding for the new building had been approved. The new library building was completed in October 1925 and named after Church President Heber J. Grant. The



Heber J. Grant Library, 1929. The new library building raised the morale of students and faculty on campus and demonstrated that the university was serious about improving its library and providing the resources to facilitate academic scholarship. Courtesy University Archives, Brigham Young University.

building was two stories high and contained office space and classrooms as well as the closed stacks housing the library collections and a large reading room.⁹⁸

Simultaneously, President Harris worked to improve the collection that would be housed in the new library building. In November 1921, the faculty library committee reported that they would make a concerted effort “to increase the number of volumes to 20,000 during the year.”⁹⁹ By February 1924, they had exceeded their goal, and the library boasted over 35,000 volumes and around the same number of pamphlets.¹⁰⁰ Harris and the university community both agreed that the improved library collection and the new library building were a successful addition to the campus. They also agreed that the enhanced library was bearing fruit as the scholarship of students and faculty steadily improved.¹⁰¹

With the new library and its improved collections, the upgraded educational qualifications of the faculty, and the slowly improving quality of the laboratory equipment, President Harris was ready to re-apply: in November 1927, Harris announced to the university faculty that “application for the accrediting of the Brigham Young University would be made to the Association of American Universities.”¹⁰²

Harris put together a report on the university, which he submitted along with an application for accreditation to the Association of American Universities. The report detailed the history of Brigham Young University, its organization, its admission requirements, its graduation requirements, the faculty qualifications, information on the student body, financial information, details about students who had pursued graduate work, the caliber of the library, and the quality of scientific equipment as well as other things.¹⁰³ The report was clearly designed to show that Brigham Young University met the accreditation requirements of the Association of American Universities.

The approval process proved to be as painfully slow as it had been before. It was not until October 1928 that E. B. Stouffer, dean of the Graduate School at the University of Kansas, made his inspection tour of Brigham Young University. Prior to his visit, Stouffer sent Harris a list of questions that he wanted addressed. He asked for information on the student body, the degrees granted by the institution, the qualifications of the faculty and their salaries, the financial statements for several years, information on expenditures on laboratory equipment, and information on students who had left Brigham Young University for graduate schools.¹⁰⁴ Following his inspection visit, Stouffer wrote Harris requesting additional information on the library. He was particularly interested in the usage of the collection and the qualifications of the library staff.¹⁰⁵ Harris was more than happy to furnish this information and replied, "The records of the library show that during the past year the circulation of books in the library itself, including the reserve books, was something over 100,000 volumes." He also detailed the qualifications of the library staff.¹⁰⁶

Finally, in late November, Harris received notification from Adam LeRoy Jones that the Association of American Universities had placed "Brigham Young University on its approved list of colleges."¹⁰⁷ All of the campus community's hard work had paid off. BYU was finally recognized as a full-fledged member of the academic community. Harris had successfully achieved one of his most pressing goals, and Brigham Young University's graduates would now be treated equally with graduates of institutions such as the University of Chicago, Columbia University, Harvard University, and, significantly, the University of California. However, there was still work to do. Both the Northwest Association and the Association of American Universities had recognized Brigham Young University as a college, not a university. Graduate work at the institution would need to be strengthened and improved significantly before the accrediting associations would grant recognition as a university.¹⁰⁸

IMPACT OF ACCREDITATION TODAY

Franklin S. Harris did not recognize the lasting impact that his successful bid to bring Brigham Young University into the fraternity of colleges and universities would have. He was simply meeting a perceived problem in pragmatic and practical ways. However, Harris's decision to seek accreditation has had two important long-term effects on the history of Brigham Young University. First, Harris proved to Church leadership that they could run a first-rate educational institution on a limited budget and that it would yield tremendous benefits to the Church. Second, he established a pattern through which the Church could measure the success of its experiment in higher education—particularly as the institution advanced from academy to college to university.

Franklin S. Harris's efforts to achieve accreditation for Brigham Young University demonstrated that the institution could be successful academically and still remain true to its spiritual roots. Harris understood well that the institution's principal concern was the spiritual well-being of the students attending Brigham Young University. As he had stated in his inaugural address, "It is our purpose therefore not only to train our students in the useful arts and sciences of the day, but also to fit them to lead in various civic, religious, and industrial problems that arise out of the complex conditions of modern life."¹⁰⁹ He envisioned the institution as a place where students would come to be trained as leaders—leaders in academia as well as leaders in the Church.

Nearly sixty years after Franklin S. Harris demonstrated that Brigham Young University could be accredited and recognized by the fraternity of colleges and universities while maintaining its spiritual moorings, Harris's vision of the institution's potential had



Franklin S. Harris, 1929. Harris was the right man at the right place when Brigham Young University needed leadership and guidance as it began to stretch to reach its potential. His vision and confidence enabled the university to successfully achieve accreditation. Courtesy University Archives, Brigham Young University.

become the expectation of Church leadership as well as Church members. In 1992, Gordon B. Hinckley, First Counselor in the First Presidency, told students at a campus devotional about the expectations that the leadership of the Church had for BYU. He said, "This institution is unique. It is remarkable. It is a continuing experiment on a great premise that a large and complex university can be first-class academically while nurturing an environment of faith in God and the practice of Christian principles. You are testing whether academic excellence and belief in the Divine can walk hand in hand."¹¹⁰ At the inauguration of President Cecil O. Samuelson in 2003, President Hinckley, then President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, again addressed the importance of Brigham Young University to the Church. He stated, "Here we are doing what is not done in any other major university of which I am aware. We are demonstrating that faith in the Almighty can accompany and enrich scholarship in the secular. It is more than an experiment. It is an accomplishment."¹¹¹

Brigham Young University maintained accreditation with the Association of American Universities until 1949 when that organization divested itself of its accrediting functions. It has also successfully maintained accreditation with the Northwest Association of Secondary and Higher Schools and its successors for over eighty years. Franklin S. Harris's decision to seek accreditation from the Northwest Association has become one of the most important decisions that he made. According to the Accreditation Handbook for the Northwest Association, "Accreditation by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities means that an institution's own goals are soundly conceived, that its educational programs have been intelligently devised, that its purposes are being accomplished, and that the institution is so organized, staffed, and supported to merit confidence in the quality and effectiveness of the institution in achieving its mission."¹¹² The focus on institutional mission is a critical part of the Northwest Association accreditation standards and is one of the reasons why Brigham Young University continues to maintain accreditation with them. The Northwest Association is committed to considering "institutional missions and characteristics when evaluating institutions for accreditation."¹¹³ This allows Brigham Young University to maintain its dual mission of promoting the spiritual growth of students while still being recognized as a first-class university.

The accreditation process will continue to remain relevant and important to Brigham Young University as it strives to reach the prophetic goal established for it by President Spencer W. Kimball during the university's 1975 centennial celebrations. President Kimball stated, "The faculty have a double heritage which they must pass along: the secular knowledge that

history has washed to the feet of mankind with the new knowledge brought by scholarly research—but also the vital and revealed truths that have been sent to us from heaven.”¹¹⁴ The periodic self-evaluations prompted by the accreditation process continue to allow Brigham Young University to maintain its course and preserve its unique mission to intermingle the sacred and the secular.

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1. “Dr. Harris, Pres.-Elect Visits School,” *White and Blue*, May 4, 1921, 1, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah (hereafter cited as Perry Special Collections). The commissioner of education at this time was Elder David O. McKay.

2. For more information on Harris’s vision for Brigham Young University, see J. Gordon Daines III, “Charting the Future of Brigham Young University: Franklin S. Harris and the Changing Landscape of the Church’s Educational Network, 1921–1926,” *BYU Studies* 45, no. 4 (2006): 76–77.

3. “Dr. Harris, Pres.-Elect Visits School,” 1.

4. Janet Jenson, *The Many Lives of Franklin S. Harris* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Print Services, 2002), 25–55.

5. Daines, “Charting the Future,” 76.

6. James E. Talmage to Franklin S. Harris, June 10, 1921; Heber J. Grant to Franklin S. Harris, November 22, 1921; John A. Widtsoe to Franklin S. Harris, July 20, 1922, all in Franklin S. Harris Presidential Records, 1921–45, Perry Special Collections.

7. Susa Young Gates to Franklin S. Harris, June 19, 1924, Harris Presidential Records.

8. Daines, “Charting the Future,” 78.

9. Ernest L. Wilkinson, ed., *Brigham Young University: The First One Hundred Years*, 4 vols. (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1975), 2:32–35. The scholars included John A. Widtsoe and James E. Talmage, who were both scholars and Church leaders, and Harvey Fletcher.

10. “Pres.-Elect Harris Writes on the Future of School,” *White and Blue*, May 25, 1921, 1, Perry Special Collections.

11. Wilkinson, *First One Hundred Years*, 1:265.

12. Wilkinson, *First One Hundred Years*, 1:375.

13. Minutes of the Brigham Young University Board of Trustees, January 28, 1925, Perry Special Collections.

14. John R. Mayor, *Accreditation in Teacher Education: Its Influence on Higher Education* (Washington, D.C.: National Commission on Accrediting, 1965), 12.

15. Hugh Hawkins, *Banding Together: The Rise of National Associations in American Higher Education, 1887–1950* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 6.
16. Jeffrey W. Alstete, *Accreditation Matters: Achieving Academic Recognition and Renewal* (San Francisco: Wiley Periodicals, 2004), 10.
17. Charles Homer Haskins, *The Rise of Universities* (New York: Henry Holt, 1923; repr. New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers, 2002), 4. Citations are to the Transaction edition.
18. Helene Wieruszowski, *The Medieval University: Masters, Students, Learning* (Princeton, N.J.: Van Nostrand, 1966), 16.
19. Haskins, *Rise of Universities*, 69.
20. John S. Brubacher and Willis Rudy, *Higher Education in Transition: A History of American Colleges and Universities* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers, 1997), 59.
21. For more information on the predominantly religious roots of American colleges and universities, see George M. Marsden, *The Soul of the American University: From Protestant Establishment to Established Nonbelief* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).
22. Daniel Walker Howe, *What Hath God Wrought: The Transformation of America, 1815–1848* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 457–62.
23. Brubacher and Rudy, *Higher Education*, 245.
24. Lloyd E. Blauch, ed., *Accreditation in Higher Education* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1959), 9.
25. Blauch, *Accreditation in Higher Education*, 10.
26. Fred F. Harclerod, *Accreditation: History, Process, and Problems* (Washington, D.C.: American Association for Higher Education, 1980), 21.
27. These institutions were Clark University, Yale University, the Catholic University of America, the University of Pennsylvania, the University of Chicago, Stanford University, Princeton University, the Johns Hopkins University, Harvard University, Cornell University, Columbia University, the University of Michigan–Ann Arbor, the University of Wisconsin–Madison, and the University of California–Berkeley.
28. Blauch, *Accreditation in Higher Education*, 11.
29. Brubacher and Rudy, *Higher Education in Transition*, 357.
30. Hawkins, *Banding Together*, 3.
31. Hawkins, *Banding Together*, 15.
32. Ann Leigh Speicher, “The Association of American Universities: A Century of Service to Higher Education, 1900–2000,” available online at Association of American Universities, AAU Beginnings, <http://www.aau.edu/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=1090> (accessed June 3, 2010).
33. The Northwest Association adopted the accreditation guidelines of the North Central Association in 1921 and established their own guidelines in 1923. James F. Bemis, *Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges: 75 Year History, 1917–1991* (Boise, Idaho: Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges, 1991), 2; and Harclerod, *Accreditation*, 22.
34. Blauch, *Accreditation in Higher Education*, 3.

35. Franklin S. Harris to Leonard V. Koos, August 8, 1922; Franklin S. Harris to Samuel P. Capen, August 8, 1922; Franklin S. Harris to Association of American Universities, August 8, 1922; all in Harris Presidential Records.

36. Franklin S. Harris to Samuel P. Capen, August 8, 1922, Harris Presidential Records.

37. Samuel P. Capen to Franklin S. Harris, August 26, 1922, Harris Presidential Records.

38. Kiefer Sauls to Wilford J. Merrill, April 12, 1923, Harris Presidential Records.

39. Franklin S. Harris to A. O. Leuschner, April 16, 1923, Harris Presidential Records.

40. Charles B. Lipman to Franklin S. Harris, August 9, 1923, Harris Presidential Records.

41. Franklin S. Harris to Adam S. Bennion, September 7, 1923, Harris Presidential Records.

42. Franklin S. Harris to Charles B. Lipman, September 8, 1923, Harris Presidential Records.

43. Charles B. Lipman to Franklin S. Harris, September 20, 1923, Harris Presidential Records.

44. *Brigham Young University Quarterly: Annual Catalogue for the School Year, 1922–1923* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University, 1922), 28, Perry Special Collections.

45. Minutes of the Executive Committee of the Brigham Young University Board of Trustees, December 9, [1921], Perry Special Collections.

46. Charles B. Lipman to Franklin S. Harris, January 16, 1924, Harris Presidential Records.

47. Franklin S. Harris to Charles B. Lipman, January 25, 1924, Harris Presidential Records.

48. The historical records of the Northwest Association of Secondary and Higher Schools are unavailable for public research. Fortunately, Franklin S. Harris kept copies of both the incoming and outgoing correspondence related to Brigham Young University's accreditation bid. Frederick E. Bolton, representative of the Northwest Association, also kept some of his correspondence and wrote an unpublished history of the association that is contained in his personal papers at the University of Washington. These two sources allow us to form a fairly accurate picture of the university's accreditation bid.

49. Philip Soulen to Franklin S. Harris, September 11, 1922, Frederick Elmer Bolton Papers, Accession No. 0194-001, University Archives, Special Collections Division, Allen Library, University of Washington, Seattle, Washington.

50. Franklin S. Harris to Frederick E. Bolton, September 15, 1922, Bolton Papers.

51. Frederick E. Bolton to Franklin S. Harris, September 19, 1922, Harris Presidential Records.

52. Franklin S. Harris to Frederick E. Bolton, September 22, 1922, Harris Presidential Records.

53. "1st Quarter Century of the N.W.A History of the Northwest Association of Secondary and Higher Schools," 10, edited by Frederick E. Bolton, published

and distributed by the College of Education, University of Washington, Seattle, Washington (manuscript draft), box 15, Bolton Papers.

54. Frederick E. Bolton to Franklin S. Harris, October 7, 1922, Harris Presidential Records.

55. Franklin S. Harris to Adam S. Bennion, October 30, 1922, Harris Presidential Records.

56. Frederick E. Bolton to Franklin S. Harris, November 14, 1922, Harris Presidential Records.

57. Application form to the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education of the Northwest Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools, Harris Presidential Papers.

58. "1st Quarter Century of the N.W.A History," 4.

59. "1st Quarter Century of the N.W.A History," 10–13.

60. "1st Quarter Century of the N.W.A History," 20.

61. "1st Quarter Century of the N.W.A History," 20.

62. Wilkinson, *First One Hundred Years*, 2:124.

63. *Brigham Young University Quarterly: Annual Catalogue for the School Year, 1922–1923*.

64. Minutes of the Executive Committee of the Brigham Young University Board of Trustees, April 24, 1922, Perry Special Collections.

65. Wilkinson, *First One Hundred Years*, 2:131.

66. Wilkinson, *First One Hundred Years*, 2:124–25.

67. Between 1924 and 1928, sixteen faculty members took advantage of the leave system to improve their academic credentials. Five completed doctoral degrees and eleven completed master's degrees. Wilkinson, *First One Hundred Years*, 2:140.

68. Daines, "Charting the Future," 80–81.

69. Frederick E. Bolton to Franklin S. Harris, November 14, 1922, Harris Presidential Records.

70. Frederick E. Bolton to Franklin S. Harris, April 7, 1922, Bolton Papers.

71. The historical records of the Association of American Universities are held by the Johns Hopkins University. I contacted the Johns Hopkins University in early 2008 to see if they had any information on Brigham Young University's early accreditation bids with the association and was informed that they had very spotty records for the first several decades of the association. The archivist checked their records and was unable to locate anything related to BYU's bids for accreditation in the 1920s. They were also unable to find accreditation guidelines for this period. This forced me to rely heavily on the accreditation records held in the Franklin S. Harris Presidential Records to tell this portion of the story.

72. Ralph V. Chamberlin, *The University of Utah: A History of Its First One Hundred Years, 1850 to 1950* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1960), 387.

73. Hawkins, *Banding Together*, 39.

74. Hawkins, *Banding Together*, 85.

75. Franklin S. Harris to Kendrick C. Babcock, September 5, 1922, Harris Presidential Records.

76. Kendrick C. Babcock to Franklin S. Harris, September 27, 1922, Harris Presidential Records.

77. Franklin S. Harris to Kendrick C. Babcock, October 30, 1922, Harris Presidential Records.
78. Franklin S. Harris to Kendrick C. Babcock, April 16, 1923, Harris Presidential Records.
79. Kendrick C. Babcock to Franklin S. Harris, April 20, 1923, Harris Presidential Records.
80. Adam LeRoy Jones to Franklin S. Harris, November 27, 1923, Harris Presidential Records.
81. Franklin S. Harris to Adam LeRoy Jones, December 3, 1923, Harris Presidential Records.
82. Report prepared by David Allan Robertson of the University of Chicago for the Committee on Classification of Colleges and Universities of the American Association of Universities, May 1, 1924, Harris Presidential Records.
83. Report prepared by David Allan Robertson for the Committee on Classification.
84. Adam LeRoy Jones to Franklin S. Harris, May 27, 1924, Harris Presidential Records.
85. Franklin S. Harris to Adam LeRoy Jones, June 12, 1924, Harris Presidential Records.
86. Adam LeRoy Jones to Franklin S. Harris, June 17, 1924, Harris Presidential Records.
87. Franklin S. Harris to David A. Robertson, July 17, 1924, Harris Presidential Records.
88. David A. Robertson to Franklin S. Harris, September 12, 1924, Harris Presidential Records.
89. Franklin S. Harris to David A. Robertson, September 26, 1924, Harris Presidential Records.
90. Franklin S. Harris, "A Program for the Brigham Young University," in Minutes of the Brigham Young University Board of Trustees meeting, December 11, 1925, 2, Brigham Young University Board of Trustees Records, Perry Special Collections.
91. Gary James Bergera and Ronald Priddis, *Brigham Young University: A House of Faith* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1985), 15.
92. Daines, "Charting the Future," 81.
93. Report Prepared by David Allan Robertson for the Committee on Classification, 8.
94. Harris, "Program for Brigham Young University," Board of Trustees Minutes, 3.
95. "Program for Brigham Young University," 4–5.
96. Daines, "Charting the Future," 86–87.
97. "Program for Brigham Young University," Board of Trustees Minutes, 3.
98. For more information on Harris's successful bid for a library building, see Daines, "Charting the Future," 82–84.
99. Brigham Young University Faculty Meeting Minutes, November 14, 1921, Perry Special Collections.
100. Wilkinson, *First One Hundred Years*, 2:138.
101. Daines, "Charting the Future," 84.

102. Faculty Meeting Minutes, November 21, 1927.
103. "A Report to Association of American Universities," [1927], Harris Presidential Records.
104. E. B. Stouffer to Franklin S. Harris, October 5, 1928, Harris Presidential Records.
105. E. B. Stouffer to Franklin S. Harris, November 6, 1928, Harris Presidential Records.
106. Franklin S. Harris to E. B. Stouffer, November 9, 1928, Harris Presidential Records.
107. Adam LeRoy Jones to Franklin S. Harris, November 20, 1928, Harris Presidential Records.
108. For more information on Brigham Young University's subsequent accreditation as a university, see Wilkinson, *First One Hundred Years*, 2:255, 660–65; 3:220–39.
109. Franklin S. Harris, "Inaugural Address," in *Educating Zion*, ed. John W. Welch and Don E. Norton (Provo, Utah: BYU Studies, 1996), 7.
110. Gordon B. Hinckley, "Our Sacred Trust: Two Addresses," in Welch and Norton, *Educating Zion*, 206.
111. Gordon B. Hinckley, "Remarks at the Inauguration of President Cecil O. Samuelson," in *Brigham Young University Speeches, 2003–2004* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University, 2004), 101; available online at <http://speeches.byu.edu/?act=viewitem&id=144> (accessed June 3, 2010).
112. *Accreditation Handbook NWCCU*, 2003 Edition, 2, Brigham Young University Accreditation Self-Study Records, 2006, Perry Special Collections; available online at <http://www.nwccu.org/Pubs%20Forms%20and%20Updates/Publications/Publications.htm> (accessed June 9, 2010).
113. *Accreditation Handbook NWCCU*, 2.
114. Spencer W. Kimball, "Climbing the Hills Just Ahead: Three Addresses," in Welch and Norton, *Educating Zion*, 64.

Robert J. Matthews and the RLDS Church's Inspired Version of the Bible

Thomas E. Sherry

Robert J. Matthews was the single most prolific source of scholarly publications on the Joseph Smith Translation (JST) of the Bible since his 1975 groundbreaking book, *A Plainer Translation*.¹ Of him, Elder Bruce R. McConkie said: “Brother Matthews is the world authority on the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible [and his] . . . spiritual insight is of surpassing import.”² Matthews’s interest in the JST began at age eighteen, and

1. Robert J. Matthews, *“A Plainer Translation”: Joseph Smith’s Translation of the Bible, A History and Commentary* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1975). Matthews’s work on the JST is voluminous; his work included over fifty-five major articles and books—many more than any other single author. He died on August 30, 2009. Notwithstanding his significant and critical contributions, he wrote: “Throughout the forty years I have studied the Joseph Smith Translation, I have not been in a hurry, nor have I felt that I had a message for the Church. It has been a personal interest, and I have not felt a call to set anybody right.” Robert J. Matthews, “The Joseph Smith Translation and the Doctrine and Covenants: Historical and Doctrinal Companions,” in Robert L. Millet and Larry E. Dahl, eds., *The Capstone of Our Religion* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1989), 63. Among scholars in the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, former Church Historian Richard P. Howard has also written extensively and published the foremost RLDS work, *Restoration Scriptures: A Study of Their Textual Development* (Independence, Missouri: Herald Publishing House, 1st ed. 1969; 2nd ed. 1995).

2. Bruce R. McConkie, “This Generation Shall Have My Word through You,” *The Seventh Annual Sidney B. Sperry Symposium: The Doctrine and Covenants; January 27, 1979* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University, 1979), 17. The introductory paragraph containing this quote also stated that Robert J. Matthews was “working with great insight, with incisive scholarship, and with superior spiritual ability on some scriptural projects that in the process of time will provide material for the Church of incalculable worth. . . . [Matthews] must have been trained and

Thomas E. Sherry

The August 2009 passing of Robert J. Matthews marked the loss of a careful and conscientious scholar, a devoted disciple, and a dear friend and mentor to so many. He was the most prolific author on JST-related topics and truly the “dean” of JST studies. I was privileged to have him and Robert Millet on the committee for my 1988 dissertation, which dealt with the history of how the JST had been treated in publications from 1847 to 1987.



Since then, I have continued to study inspired translation issues. On a research trip to the Community of Christ archives in 2004, Ronald E. Romig shared with me a file of correspondence related to the *Inspired Version* from 1957 to 1975. The letters to and from RLDS Church leaders had numerous references to Matthews and his requests to work with the original manuscripts. These letters painted a picture that had never before been seen and that helps piece together the intriguing story of how both Matthews and the LDS Church again obtained access to these critical documents and the inspired biblical revision work of Joseph Smith. This article tells that story.

though he published on many subjects, the JST was a consuming scholarly focus. Larry E. Dahl and Robert L. Millet have written:

It was in the summer of 1944 that Brother Matthews listened to a radio address given by Elder Joseph Fielding Smith, in which the Apostle quoted a passage of scripture from the King James Version (John 1:18), noted that the translation was incorrect, and then cited the same passage from the Joseph Smith Translation. At that point in his young life . . . Brother Matthews had never heard of the Joseph Smith Translation.

qualified in the pre-existence, to do the things that [he is] now doing; and out of it will come some blessings to the Church, where Biblical and scriptural scholarship is concerned that none of us yet fully envision.” McConkie was referring to the work of Matthews and others on the pending publication of the new LDS edition of the Bible, which included references to Joseph Smith’s Translation of the Bible.

And yet there came a fascination—much more than a simple curiosity—with this work of the Prophet Joseph, a fascination which over the years ripened into a thorough, scholarly study of the translation.³

Matthews's master's thesis and doctoral dissertation on the subject subsequently laid the groundwork for over fifty publications on the history, making, and doctrine of the JST and its place in the history of the Restoration.⁴

In the course of his research, Matthews wrote to administrators, mostly those in the Church Historian's office of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saint (RLDS, now Community of Christ). Over a period of fifteen years, he requested help with various research issues relative to the JST and asked to work firsthand with the original manuscripts. His requests for textual clarifications were often accommodated, but permission to work with the documents was repeatedly denied.

Years later, when Matthews was finally allowed to see the original manuscripts, his work on verifying the content of Joseph Smith's Bible revision resolved much "nagging uncertainty" surrounding the text for Latter-day Saints.⁵ Historically, his work came at a time when the Scriptures Publication Committee for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) was preparing the content of their 1979 edition of the Bible. His appraisal on the reliability of the RLDS-published versions opened the way for the committee to seek access to the translation and subsequently to include hundreds of footnote citations from it. Accompanying that inclusion was a broad and persistent educational effort to increase awareness and appreciation of the JST through LDS periodicals and educational materials.⁶ These

3. Robert J. Matthews, *A Bible! A Bible!* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1990), vii. More of Matthews's contributions and personal recollections on the saga of his JST interests are chronicled in Robert L. Millet, "Joseph Smith's Translation of the Bible: A Historical Overview" in *The Joseph Smith Translation*, 38–41; Matthews's *A Bible! A Bible!*; Ray L. Huntington and Brian M. Hauglid, "Robert J. Matthews and His Work with the Joseph Smith Translation," *The Religious Educator* 5, no. 2 (2004): 23–47; and Alexander L. Baugh, "Teacher, Scholar, Administrator: A Conversation with Robert J. Matthews," *The Religious Educator* 5, no. 3 (2004): 117–36.

4. Robert J. Matthews, "A Study of the Doctrinal Significance of Certain Textual Changes Made by the Prophet Joseph Smith in the Four Gospels of the Inspired Version of the New Testament" (master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1960). Robert J. Matthews, "A study of the text of the Inspired Revision of the Bible" (PhD diss., Brigham Young University, 1968).

5. A term used by McConkie in "The Doctrinal Restoration," 14.

6. From the 1975 publication of Matthews's first book, *A Plainer Translation*, to 2006, there had been over fifty Church-sponsored publications aimed at educating Latter-day Saints on the content, nature, and inspiration of the JST. In his major address to LDS Church educators at the 1984 symposium on the JST, Elder Bruce R.

efforts were augmented and stimulated by two important JST symposia, in 1984 and 1995, inspired by Matthews and hosted at Brigham Young University.⁷ All these developments led to the general use and acceptance of the JST among LDS Church members, educators, and ecclesiastical leaders, thus reversing a century-old practice of omission.

When Matthews started his research on the New Translation, he did not realize he was entering a complex scene of cultural and religious history that had led the LDS Church to eschew the printed version of the Prophet's revision for more than a century and the RLDS to hail it as a keystone in their claim as the "true" church of the Restoration. By 1979, these positions had reversed, and no one played a more significant role in that historic reversal than Matthews.⁸ This documentary history, which draws on letters in the Community of Christ archives and from Matthews's personal files, chronicles the personal correspondence and issues involved in Matthews's finally gaining permission in 1968 to study the original *Inspired Version* manuscripts after fifteen years of repeated refusals. This history also helps us understand the developing attitudes of the RLDS Church toward Joseph Smith and his Bible revision, and it reveals the emerging interest in his revelatory translation among Latter-day Saints.

Joseph Smith's New Translation

In response to divine directive, Joseph Smith had undertaken an inspired revision of the King James Version of the Bible shortly after the Book of Mormon was published. The Prophet and his contemporaries referred to the work as the "New Translation," and the endeavor occupied much of his time from 1830 to 1833. Periodically thereafter, until his death in 1844, the Prophet sought unsuccessfully to prepare the work for publication.⁹ His translation included thousands of changes and additions

McConkie charged them: "When the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible . . . came forth, then teachers were to use it. . . . This, then, is the command to teach the changes and additions now found in the so-called Inspired Version. . . . This, then, is what is expected of us as teachers." McConkie, "The Doctrinal Restoration," 3.

7. Publications from these symposia are Nyman and Millet, eds., *The Joseph Smith Translation*; and Robert L. Millet and Robert J. Matthews, eds., *Plain and Precious Truths Restored: The Doctrinal and Historical Significance of the Joseph Smith Translation* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1995).

8. For the larger story on this change and where Matthews fits in, see Thomas E. Sherry, "Appendix: Changing Attitudes Toward Joseph Smith's Translation of the Bible," in *Plain and Precious Truths Restored*, 187–226.

9. See Robert J. Matthews, "Joseph Smith's Efforts to Publish His Bible 'Translation,'" *Ensign* 13 (January 1983): 57–64.

to verses in the Old and New Testaments and largely laid the foundation for much of the doctrinal contributions of the restored gospel.

Joseph Smith's wife Emma retained the unpublished manuscripts when leaders of the LDS Church left Nauvoo in 1846, and "none of the participants in the translation process were with the Church when the Saints moved west."¹⁰ In 1866, she transferred custodial care of the manuscripts to her son Joseph Smith III, then president of the RLDS Church, which had been organized six years earlier.¹¹ The translation was originally published by the RLDS Church in 1867 with the title *Holy Scriptures*. In 1936, the subtitle *Inspired Version* (IV) was added, and this eventually became the common name used by RLDS members; more recently the term Joseph Smith's Bible Revision (JSBR) has also been employed in RLDS academic circles.

Because LDS Church members lost access to the Prophet's "crowning achievement," along with the rich history related to the translation, they had many misconceptions about the JST.¹² However, the misunderstanding surrounding the work changed in the latter part of the twentieth century, and Matthews was the central figure in enabling this change.

Among the historical sources contributing to our understanding of how Matthews finally gained access to the New Translation manuscripts is a letter file dedicated to correspondence relative to the *Inspired Version*. The file contains sixty-nine letters to and from RLDS First Presidency members and other Church administrators between 1957 and 1975. (See appendix B for a list of RLDS administrators mentioned in this article.) Several letters treat various aspects of Matthews's requests as well as other issues of challenge and change among administrators that affected their responses.

Little did Matthews know that his many requests to work firsthand with the original manuscripts came during an increasingly complicated period in RLDS history that included issues relative to the publication, assessment,

10. Scott H. Faulring, Kent P. Jackson, and Robert J. Matthews, eds., *Joseph Smith's New Translation of the Bible: Original Manuscripts* (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2004), 7. For more on the odyssey of the JST from historic nonuse by the LDS Church to official inclusion in the 1979 LDS edition of the Bible, see Robert L. Millet, "Joseph Smith's Translation of the Bible: A Historical Overview," in *The Joseph Smith Translation*, 35–42.

11. In 2001, the RLDS Church changed its name to Community of Christ.

12. McConkie taught that "as a crowning achievement [Joseph Smith] would begin the perfection of the Bible. . . . The Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible is holy scripture. In one sense of the word, it is the crowning part of the doctrinal restoration." McConkie, "The Doctrinal Restoration," 10, 21. The LDS Church did retain for use those portions of the JST that were previously published by Joseph Smith in Church periodicals and later became part of the Pearl of Great Price (the Book of Moses and Matthew 24).

and use of the *Inspired Version*. The evolving climate among administrators, church members, academics, and historians surrounding *Inspired Version* issues initially precipitated the early denials of Matthews's requests.

It also is impossible to separate changing views on the *Inspired Version* from the greater fabric of historic doctrinal change that occurred in the RLDS Church during the 1960s and 1970s, and which continues into the twenty-first century. Of this evolution, Dave Nii, an RLDS historian, has written:

For a movement that spoke highly of education, knowledge, and truth, the confrontation with data that did not support the RLDS "orthodoxy" of historical theology presented significant moments of self-reflection and self-examination. . . . The church leadership appeared to make a discernable move from a perspective of the "one true church" toward a perspective of "a church seeking truth."¹³

Inquiries into the New Translation Manuscripts

In late February 1959, the RLDS First Presidency received an inquiry from Glen H. Johnson (of the Utah RLDS Church) in which he asked whether "the Utah [LDS] Church has ever approached the Reorganized

13. Dave Nii, "Orthodoxy in RLDS Thought: The Questionable Quest for Legitimacy and Reasonableness," in *Restoration Studies VIII*, ed. Maurice L. Draper (Independence, Missouri: Herald Publishing House, 2000), 137. More on the continuing evolution in RLDS thought can be found in the recent 1993–2005 colloquy series cosponsored by the RLDS/Community of Christ First Presidency and Graceland College: Richard A. Brown, ed., *Theology*, 13 vols. (Independence, Missouri: Graceland Press, 1993–2005). Thanks to Alma Blair and William Russell for the following reference guide on the earlier evolution of RLDS beliefs, theology, and practices: Clifford A. Cole, *Faith for New Frontiers* (Independence, Missouri: Herald House, 1956). See William D. Russell, *Treasures in Earthen Vessels: An Introduction to the New Testament* (Independence, Missouri: Department of Religious Education, Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints, 1966); Garland E. Tickemyer, *The Good News: An Outline Story of the Rise, Fall, Attempts at Reformation, and Final Restoration of the Church of Jesus Christ* (Independence, Missouri: Herald Publishing House, n.d.); Wayne Ham, "Problems in Interpreting the Book of Mormon as History," in *Courage: A Journal of History, Thought, and Action* 1, no. 1 (September 1970): 15–22; Alan O. Tyree, ed., *Exploring the Faith: A Series of Studies in Faith of the Church Prepared by a Committee on Basic Beliefs* (Independence, Missouri: Herald Publishing House, 1987); Richard P. Howard, "Latter Day Saint Scriptures and the Doctrine of Propositional Revelation," in *Courage: A Journal of History, Thought, and Action* 1, no. 4 (June 1971): 209–25; Richard P. Howard, *Restoration Scriptures: A Study of Their Textual Development* (Independence, Missouri: Herald Publishing House, 1969, 2d ed. 1995).

This article quotes RLDS administrative letters regarding the *Inspired Version* of the Bible. Ronald E. Romig, Church Archivist for the Community of Christ, granted access to the letters and reviewed this article prior to publication: "Tom, I carefully reread your revised manuscript and wholeheartedly support its publication. It will make an important addition to our understanding of the evolution of the use and popularity of the content, especially in the LDS movement." Formal approval from Community of Christ leaders to publish the article also came through Romig: "Tell BYU press representatives that you have already received all the necessary permissions and that the Community of Christ is anxious for you to proceed to publication."

Church asking for the right to publish the Inspired Version of the Scriptures."¹⁴ The First Presidency passed the inquiry to Kenneth Graham of Herald House, the official publishing arm of the RLDS Church. He responded to Johnson that no record existed of such a request. Graham observed that sales in Utah averaged between two and three hundred copies a year, but it seemed "rather clear that there is no official approval of the book" by the LDS Church. Graham recalled that Herald House had tried to advertise the *Inspired Version* in LDS publications but was refused space. He also noted the fact that "the text of the Inspired Version is now public domain and should the Utah people decide to come out with an edition of their own, they could do so without copyright infringement."¹⁵

This exchange between Johnson and Graham introduced to the letter file the first reflection of long-standing angst between the LDS Church and RLDS interests over the New Translation. Regardless of Matthews's academic interests or qualifications, his requests and the responses to them were significantly influenced by the unsettled historical relationship between the two churches during this era.

14. Glen H. Johnson to the First Presidency, February 25, 1959, Community of Christ Library-Archives. Hereafter, all citations to letters refer to the letter file associated with the New Translation manuscripts in this repository unless otherwise noted.

15. Glen H. Johnson to Kenneth Graham, March 20, 1959.

In May 1960, Matthews first wrote to RLDS historian Charles A. Davies, inquiring about changes in various printings of the *Inspired Version* and seeking permission to “quote extensively from the Inspired Version [in classes, correspondence, etc.], and would appreciate very much knowing that you had given complete permission. Of course, it goes without saying that such quotes would be favorable, and not to criticize.”¹⁶ Matthews further inquired about the publication date of the Bible used by Joseph Smith in the New Translation and wondered if he might view it and other related documents, including the Bible revision manuscripts, if he visited the Church Historian’s office in Missouri. In closing, Matthews referred to his “word by word comparison” of the King James Version with the *Inspired Version* and noted that “this has been a very rewarding study [and] has given me an appreciation for the Inspired Version.”¹⁷ Matthews recalled receiving a written denial of this request to see the original documents.¹⁸

Four years later, in May 1964, Davies wrote the RLDS First Presidency summarizing ten issues related to preservation plans for the New Translation manuscripts, which were in “poor condition.” The issue of preservation and archival protocol for access to aging artifacts became a pivotal point around which many denials turned. In a fair-handed manner, both RLDS and LDS researchers were generally denied access to these fragile documents. Davies noted that photographic preservation was “highly technical and therefore, costly,” but he sought permission to proceed with making an adequate copy that could be used for scholarly study. He assured the First Presidency that “Brother [Richard] Howard or myself may stand by in their work rooms while the material is prepared and the valuable document, therefore, under continual observation.”¹⁹ Davies received approval for the proposed preservation project from the First Presidency on June 25, 1964.²⁰ However, due to inadequate technology, the duplication attempt was not altogether successful.

Of the need and early efforts to preserve and protect the original manuscripts, Howard, the assistant church historian, later wrote: “The original MSS of the JSBR were at many points deteriorating, and offered a real challenge in terms of microfilming or other types of photoduplication. . . .

16. Robert J. Matthews to Charles A. Davies, May 16, 1960. While this letter was referred to in the First Presidency letter file, it is not found there. Matthews provided a copy of the letter to the author in 2003.

17. Matthews to Davies, May 16, 1960.

18. Neither the letter file nor Matthews’s personal files contained a copy of this response.

19. Charles A. Davies to First Presidency, May 13, 1964.

20. First Presidency to Charles A. Davies, June 25, 1964.

It was not until 1968 that the Xerox copyflow process in Kansas City could be implemented to make a satisfactory [copy]. . . . And it was only then that I felt easy about opening up the JSBR MSS for scholarly access.”²¹

In February 1965, Reed Durham was working on his doctoral dissertation at Brigham Young University and also had requested permission to see the New Translation manuscripts. Howard informed him that “there have been in recent months several other inquiries from students of your church along similar lines [and that] we have not been able to grant their requests.”²² No rationale for the denial was given, but the letter closed with the “wish that we could offer more help to you, but your requests cannot be granted at this time.”²³

A few weeks later, Geoffrey Spencer, an RLDS leader in Australia who later became a member of the Council of Twelve, wrote First Presidency counselor Maurice Draper about certain concerns. Spencer asked Draper for access to a list of all changes made in the 1944 edition of the *Inspired Version* from the previous 1936 edition. Spencer was making a painstaking comparison and wished to expedite his work so he might “classify [changes] in such a way as to permit some analysis of the trends and patterns of revision.”²⁴ The 1944 title page addition of “A New Corrected Edition” created a stir among both RLDS and LDS members. RLDS readers, like Spencer, wondered what had been “corrected” and on what basis those changes had been made. Additionally, LDS commentators wondered who had authority to make changes to the Prophet Joseph Smith’s work.²⁵

21. Richard P. Howard to Tom Sherry, January 4, 2006. Reprinted in appendix A, point 2.

22. Like Matthews, Durham was an LDS Church educator during this period. His completed dissertation was titled, “A History of Joseph Smith’s Revision of the Bible” (PhD diss., Brigham Young University, 1965). While Howard referred to “several other” LDS inquirers, the only additional one identified in the archive letters was BYU faculty member Paul Cheesman, who sought permission to do a side-by-side column comparison of the KJV Bible with the JST. All correspondence from Cheesman was conducted on his behalf by attorney Lawrence Foster. See letters of May 7, June 3, and June 18, 1965.

23. Richard P. Howard to Reed C. Durham, February 25, 1965.

24. Geoffrey F. Spencer to Maurice Draper, March 18, 1965.

25. For example, Mark E. Petersen wondered whether such corrections had been done by RLDS leaders “to suit their own desires,” thus making their work of “questionable value.” Petersen, *As Translated Correctly* (Salt Lake City, Deseret Book, 1966), 29–31. For more on the 1944 title page addition, see the last paragraph of the preface in that edition. Matthews’s assessment of it appears in *A Plainer Translation*, 171–74.

Knowing of a planned centennial edition of the *Inspired Version*, Spencer argued for a more scholarly, frank, and informative body of information on the translation, noting that he had “yet to see an accurate, detailed examination and evaluation.” Despite his desire, he relayed that such scholarly examinations were “almost universally ignored here, and in some places strongly resented and opposed as being ‘heretical.’”²⁶ Spencer’s observation highlights what was becoming an increasing chasm between beliefs of many RLDS Church members and an evolving theology among the leadership.

Draper responded to Spencer’s concerns by informing him that the Church had decided not to proceed with the centennial edition of the *Inspired Version* after all. Draper also hoped that when a report requested by the First Presidency on the *Inspired Version* came from the Historical Department that it would “give us a thorough evaluation of the Inspired Version history, text, etc.”²⁷ Though Draper passed Spencer’s request for a list of changes to the Church Historian and Herald House, no one has been able to locate such a list.

Draper’s letter is particularly important because it shows that the RLDS First Presidency had already responded to various queries and concerns about the *Inspired Version* by asking the Church Historian, Charles A. Davies, to prepare a “thorough evaluation” of Joseph Smith’s work on the Bible.²⁸ Given the length and detail contained in the report, it is obvious that Davies received the request well before Spencer’s letter arrived.

Davies completed “Problems in the Inspired Version,” a 151-page report for the First Presidency, in 1965. In it he drew five major conclusions: (1) The 1867 *Inspired Version* published by the “Reorganization Committee” was a conscious redaction of several varying manuscript versions and hence the final product was one of the committee, not necessarily of Joseph Smith; (2) such elements of inspiration the manuscripts may possess were likely created in the spirit of the RLDS Doctrine and Covenants sections 8 and 9; (3) later corrections and transcriptions of Joseph Smith were influenced by his study of Hebrew after 1835; (4) the printed text is not exactly as found in the manuscripts; and (5) the manuscripts were “obviously incomplete in 1844.” The Davies report became a crucial fulcrum point for tipping RLDS opinions of the New Translation, eventually calling forth a revision of some

26. Geoffrey Spencer to Maurice Draper, March 18, 1965. Later, Spencer published “A Reinterpretation of Inspiration, Revelation and L.D.S. Scripture,” *University Bulletin* 20 (Winter 1968): 41–51.

27. Maurice L. Draper to Geoffrey F. Spencer, March 25, 1965.

28. Maurice L. Draper to Charles A. Davies, March 25, 1965.

central beliefs held by RLDS leaders relative to the place and value of Joseph Smith's Bible revision along with the general revelatory nature of the translation (and by implication, other works of Joseph Smith).²⁹

About the time Davies submitted his report, his health failed. Soon after, Richard Howard, who had helped prepare the report, became acting historian (June 1965). Of the report's importance, Howard noted:

The implications of the Davies report were far reaching, in that an effort by the RLDS Council of Twelve to sponsor a church-wide festival, or institute, in honor of the centennial of the publication of the first edition of the JSBR, was sidetracked by the First Presidency's concern over the need for a thoroughgoing revisionism with respect to historic claims for the JSBR the RLDS church had been making for a whole century.³⁰

Coinciding with new concern over the *Inspired Version's* historical and revelatory integrity among RLDS leaders was an ironic emergence of a positive assessment in LDS publications. In May 1965, the RLDS First Presidency received a note from Aleah Koury. Koury, of the RLDS Council of Twelve, informed the leaders that the *Improvement Era*, the official LDS Church periodical, had recently carried a four-part series by Matthews titled "The Inspired Revision of the Bible" and that each of the monthly articles was "favorable."³¹ Soon after, over 650 copies of the *Inspired Version* had been sold in Utah bookstores—more than the highest yearly total to date. Koury assumed this news would be of interest to the First Presidency and stated, "I do not know why the Utah church is placing this emphasis upon the Inspired Version at this time, but I felt it was worthy of your attention."³²

29. A copy of the report is in the author's possession. The study was never published, and while it is 151 pages long, only the first 47 pages constitute the critical analysis section, with the "Conclusions" being found on page 47. I know of no later studies by either LDS or RLDS writers that question conclusions 1, 4, or 5. Scribal handwriting identification shows that conclusion 3 was incorrect. See Faulring, Jackson, and Matthews, *Joseph Smith's New Translation of the Bible*, 5–8. The most active controversy continues around the meaning and implications of conclusion 2.

30. Howard to Sherry, reprinted in appendix A, point 1.

31. The articles ran in the *Improvement Era* from February to May 1965. Matthews introduced the series by noting, "Members of the [LDS] Church are aware that the Prophet made this [Bible] revision, but since it has had but scant use by them, its content and value are only slightly appreciated." The four articles were titled: "The Making of the Inspired Version," "Some Significant Texts of the Inspired Translation," "Some Textual Changes Relating to the Mission of Jesus Christ and also the Prophets," and "The Value of the Inspired Version."

32. Aleah Koury to First Presidency, May 19, 1965.

Thus, 1965 was becoming a watershed year in RLDS considerations of the New Translation. Concerns from those outside the administration (both RLDS and LDS), the Davies report, and growing questions from certain RLDS Church administrators worked together to move the organization forward in new directions. The whole concept of hierarchical revelation to prophets in the RLDS tradition and its binding nature on others was shifting, and issues related to the *Inspired Version* helped fuel the discussion. This concern was explored in a later publication by Howard when he questioned the “doctrine of infallibility concerning the prophet’s statements made under inspiration” and concluded that the “church is confronted squarely with the question of the human element in revelation and scripture.”³³

In May 1965, President F. Henry Edwards wrote fellow members of the First Presidency reporting on his thorough review of Davies’s work and characterizing it as “scholarly and helpful.” The report “confronts us with a necessity for a series of decisions,” and Edwards suggested three possible courses of action: (1) seek to prevent its publication; (2) begin a proposed five-year project of offering to members findings from the report according to the “capacity of our people to absorb this information;” or (3) publish the study as is.³⁴

Edwards felt the most responsible of these choices was to pursue the second course. He went on to suggest revisions to the preface material in future editions of the *Inspired Version*. Davies’s report highlighted certain issues relative to the nature of that work and to the Church’s historical presentation of it, and Edwards recognized that the Church’s posture regarding it might have to undergo significant revision. Such revisionism included “our attitude toward the other revelatory work of Joseph.”³⁵

During this period in his newly assumed role as acting historian, Howard turned his attention to the ongoing turmoil created by continued requests for access to the New Translation manuscripts. In September he wrote to the First Presidency, “Pursuant to my conversation with President Smith yesterday I am addressing to the First Presidency a document setting

33. Richard P. Howard, “Latter Day Saint Scriptures and the Doctrine of Propositional Revelation,” *Courage: A Journal of History, Thought and Action* 1, no. 4 (June 1971): 219, 224. In the article, he also stated that in light of professionalism in the fields of history, theology, and philosophy, “what is now needed, among both leaders and members, is a serious reevaluation of both the content and character of LDS revelation and scriptures” (210).

34. F. Henry Edwards to W. Wallace Smith and Maurice L. Draper, May 25, 1965.

35. Edwards to Smith and Draper, May 25, 1965.

forth my concerns relative to research privileges in our manuscript sources of Restoration Scriptures.” Howard asked for modification in a policy, crafted the previous winter, about research privileges that made “available upon request, either in original or in photoduplication [access to] manuscript sources of Restoration Scriptures.”³⁶

Howard noted that the previously completed photoduplication of the original New Translation manuscripts had not produced a perfectly faithful copy. Thus, researchers often sought permission to verify text from the delicate and deteriorating original. This fact, along with other concerns, led Howard to repeatedly decline requests for access despite the formerly stated policy that had allowed for some exceptions.³⁷

In addition to concerns about technical considerations, Howard also expressed pointed caution over a policy of general access to these documents, regardless of the researchers’ intent or quality of scholarship and whether they came from within or without RLDS membership. He noted that once published, information entered the public domain and critics would seek to use the information to their ends: “I look ahead to consider the misuse, misquotation, misrepresentation of these materials . . . by people who have been waiting for decades to attack the foundations of the Reorganization.”³⁸

Finally, Howard expressed his concern for the faith of believers who would be better served having new information of this sort presented by scholarly and faithful RLDS members in a way that could best “promote the Christian witness of the institution and . . . nurture the membership on a sound basis.”³⁹

Not fully persuaded by Howard’s arguments, the First Presidency replied that research on original scripture documents “is going to go on whether we like it or not” and that “our discretion in this field does not extend to the suppression of access to historical sources.” They recommended having a sufficiently large corps of historians to “stay ahead” of non-RLDS-sponsored publications by making “such presentations and explanations as the situation warrants.” The First Presidency closed with an invitation for Howard to formulate a revised policy statement concerning “scripture material in our possession,” if he felt one was needed.⁴⁰

36. Richard P. Howard to First Presidency, September 9, 1965.

37. Howard to First Presidency, September 9, 1965.

38. Howard to First Presidency, September 9, 1965.

39. Howard to First Presidency, September 9, 1965.

40. First Presidency to Richard P. Howard, October 1, 1965.

On the same day, but under separate cover, the First Presidency sent Howard an invitation to begin preparing questions and articles for the *Saints' Herald*, the Church's periodical, dealing with issues raised in the Davies report, thus making "information available to the church and to the public without promoting undue division. . . . We have in mind that the major aspects of this report should in time become part of our contemporary literature. We think it should be done carefully in view of the fact that . . . some of our people have preconceived notions which might be very difficult to correct."⁴¹

Two months later, the First Presidency again emphasized to Howard the hope that Church-published treatments of key findings from the Davies report would make the information available to members, "whose present misinformation, or lack of information, might make it difficult for them to face the facts as they are in the Davies report."⁴²

Howard responded to access concerns with a revised recommendation on December 23, 1965: "Attached hereto is my final draft of a policy statement on access to the Inspired Version manuscripts." The policy justified denying access to the original manuscripts based on its fragile condition, lack of adequate photoduplication possibilities, and "potential misrepresentation of their content and background by persons not in a position to make accurate and responsible appraisal and interpretations of data contained therein."⁴³

Six days after receiving Howard's policy recommendation, First Presidency member F. Henry Edwards wrote Church President W. Wallace Smith regarding some disgruntlement by RLDS members, Apostle Clifford Cole, and Elder Jacque Pement, who had been precluded from studying the original New Translation manuscripts. They had assumed that access for purposes of a historical and exegetical study of Matthew 26 would be granted, but having been denied such according to the recently revised policy, they contacted President Edwards, who in turn wrote a letter to keep President Smith informed. Edwards questioned whether the current ban on access was correctly crafted and opined that situations such as this "cannot fail to damage us. Nor can word of this fail to hurt us with our own academic community."⁴⁴

41. First Presidency to Richard P. Howard, October 1, 1965.

42. First Presidency to Richard P. Howard, December 8, 1965.

43. Richard P. Howard to First Presidency, December 23, 1965.

44. Frank H[enry]. Edwards to W. Wallace Smith, December 29, 1965. For reflections on this unfortunate denial of access to Pement, see Howard to Sherry, reprinted in appendix A, point 5.

Matthews Again Seeks Permission

In September 1966, Matthews wrote yet another letter, this time to President W. Wallace Smith. After introducing himself to President Smith, Matthews reviewed his background in *Inspired Version* studies and reiterated his hope for access to the original manuscripts and the “marked Bible” for further study. (The results of this research were intended for use in his doctoral dissertation.) Matthews assured President Smith that while he was a member of the Utah Church, he knew that the New Translation “represents much of great value from the Prophet Joseph” and that he had “never found occasion to speak or write in any way that could be taken as uncomplimentary to the Reorganized Church in their work with the Bible.” Matthews further stated that he had “no hidden motives in making this request [though] some have taken a less than enthusiastic view of the Inspired Version (especially of the 1944 edition) and have thus lessened the real value that this Bible has. . . . I am approaching you as a friend and as one interested in the Prophet Joseph’s work with the Bible.”⁴⁵

President Smith forwarded the letter to Howard, who crafted a response on behalf of the presidency. In it he noted numerous, similar requests that came to the Church and the resulting policy that had been drafted. Howard cited three reasons for denying Matthews the access he desired: (1) graduate-level studies had already been initiated by scholars within the RLDS Church; (2) the manuscripts’ fragile and deteriorating condition; and (3) a lack of available photostatic copies suitable for accurate research.⁴⁶

Matthews was frustrated by this response and wrote back the following month. He pressed President Smith to reconsider, arguing that “as long as our people feel that the printed text presented by your Church has been revised, the literary value for proving the restoration is substantially lessened.” By gaining access to the manuscripts, Matthews asserted, he would be able to “show sufficient evidence that the printed text presents the words exactly as the Prophet put them.” Additionally,

there simply needs to be someone from Utah who also is permitted to make a careful study of the Inspired Translation with the original sources. It isn’t a matter of scholarship. Your people will do the work as well as anyone. But I’m certain that the largest group of people who accept Joseph Smith as a prophet will never appreciate the significance of this work with the Bible until someone from outside of your church is allowed to publish a first-hand report.⁴⁷

45. Robert J. Matthews to W. Wallace Smith, September 5, 1966.

46. First Presidency to Robert J. Matthews, September 14, 1966.

47. Robert J. Matthews to W. Wallace Smith, October 18, 1966. In later reflection on this rather daring and confrontational letter, Matthews felt he “may have

Finally, Matthews relayed to President Smith that some “prominent sources in the Church in Utah, in the past year or so, . . . have strongly asserted that the text of the Inspired Translation as published by you is unreliable. It is to counteract this influence that helps to urge me on. I believe the printed text is reliable, but need the chance to prove it.”⁴⁸ It is interesting to note that in the absence of access to the original manuscripts, Matthews’s chief interest was verifying textual accuracy in the printed Bible. On the other hand, RLDS leaders who more or less understood issues of textual accuracy were grappling with the implications and meaning of the changes as presented in the Davies report.

In response, the First Presidency requested that Elder John W. Bradley, an RLDS member living in Utah, “investigate [Matthews’s] standing at Brigham Young University and with the academic community, as to whether or not he would be accepted as an authority if he wrote in this field,” and to give his opinion of Matthews’s “sincerity and integrity.” They further asked Bradley for his opinion on Matthews’s assertion that certain “Mormon leaders” discredited the reliability of the *Inspired Version* in an effort to “stem any possible movement on the part of a number of Mormons to find another evidence of the divine guidance which Joseph Smith might have had in establishing the Restoration Movement”—an ironic concern given the emerging importance being assigned to the Davies report.⁴⁹

Like Bradley, Wayne Ham, an RLDS member who was formerly a graduate student at Brigham Young University, received a similar request from the First Presidency.⁵⁰ Ham responded to President W. Wallace Smith after having inquired with “some Mormon friends” who identified Matthews as an apologist, meaning he “would leave no stone unturned that would put the Inspired Version in a favorable light and he would, at the same time, do his best to throw up a smoke screen around any data that could be interpreted unfavorably.” Ham assumed Matthews was sincere and that his “overarching ambition . . . is to validate the prophetic ministry of your grandfather.”⁵¹

been a little too strong at one point.” See Hauglid and Huntington, “Robert J. Matthews and His Work,” 32.

48. Matthews to Smith, October 18, 1966.

49. First Presidency to John W. Bradley, October 21, 1966.

50. Ham had graduated from BYU in 1961 with a master’s degree in Biblical languages. At the time of this request, he was working in the RLDS Department of Religious Education. While the specific request to Ham is not in the archived letters, he referred to the First Presidency request in his response on October 24, 1966.

51. Wayne Ham to First Presidency, October 24, 1966.

Four days after Ham's letter was written, Bradley crafted his reply, affirming "without hesitation that the Mormon hierarchy is attempting to depreciate the Inspired Version [and that] this is an attempt to neutralize an otherwise extremely effective missionary tool of the R.L.D.S. Church." Bradley went on to "strongly recommend a prompt word-by-word comparison of the pre-1944 edition with the current one [with an] explanation of every change. . . . I see no other way to present the Inspired Version with the scholarly integrity it deserves." At the close of this letter is a handwritten note attached with a letterhead stamp "From the Desk of Fred L. Young," the general secretary of the RLDS Church as well as the executive secretary to the First Presidency. The note read: "I wonder how much weight Matthews would carry if he did publish? Would he be convinced or confused?"⁵²

In late October, just prior to Bradley's reply, Howard again approached the First Presidency after having read Matthews's most recent letter. Howard noted that Matthews "does not give up easily" and observed that the current request is actually the fourth received on this subject. Howard urged the First Presidency to again decline the request, reiterating reasons listed in former denials and citing issues relative to *Inspired Version* text that involved problems and discrepancies between printed versions. Howard asked the First Presidency if they really wanted various historical and doctrinal issues to be published by "Utah Mormon interpreters," which would in essence leave to the Utah Church the "educational function of enlightenment of our own people regarding some rather new and sensitive intelligence about the Inspired Version and its historical development." He also stated that the manuscripts could not do what Matthews hoped in "proving whether Joseph's corrections were in fact a restoration of the 'original text.'" Finally, he noted that RLDS scholars were working with the manuscripts at present and that it is a "universal practice of archival administration" to refuse additional access to documents while they are being studied by others.⁵³ Howard concluded, "In view of these considerations, therefore, I strongly advise that reconsideration of the former decision result in a final negative reply to Mr. Matthews."⁵⁴

Howard drafted a proposed reply to Matthews for First Presidency consideration. It once again denied Matthews access to the New Translation manuscripts but reiterated the First Presidency's former offer to make

52. John W. Bradley to First Presidency, October 28, 1966.

53. The major study being pursued at this time by an RLDS scholar was the previously cited book by Howard, *Restoration Scriptures*, which was first published in 1969. His second edition represented a major revision of that text and was published just after Howard finished his service as Church Historian in 1994.

54. Richard P. Howard to First Presidency, October 26, 1966.

available future published material on this subject. Years later Howard wrote that his “resistance to giving Matthews or anyone else access, in retrospect, was forcefully put in the context of every argument I could muster, as I was needing time to get the photoduplication successfully achieved before opening this archival treasure to general research. . . . My resistance was also, with the gift of hindsight, a little too strong.”⁵⁵

In mid-November 1966, Bradley wrote yet again to the First Presidency. He inquired about Matthews’s academic stature and reported reading his series of articles on the *Inspired Version* in the LDS periodical *Improvement Era*. Bradley concluded that Matthews was genuine, enthusiastic, and regarded as a respected authority on the subject among Utah Mormons. In fact, Matthews had taken a “more faithful position than that taken by some of our own people and is frowned upon by the Mormon hierarchy.” Bradley further asserted that “Matthews is one of the few Mormon authorities who is genuinely respectful to the printed text of the Inspired Version [though he] would be subject to sub-conscious, if not deliberate, bias.”⁵⁶

Bradley suggested a plan of action that addressed the need for further scholarly study of the *Inspired Version* while not turning “any Mormon loose, without supervision or control.” He recommended appointing a competent and respected RLDS scholar to head a team of researchers that would include “Mr. Matthews [from the LDS Church]; a representative of the Hedrickites, one from the Bickertonites, and one ‘uncommitted scholar’” and that would eventually produce a joint report. Such a report “would gain validity from the inter-denominational approach [and] I believe our church would gain great respect, and that the Inspired Version would become much more widely accepted through such an approach.” Bradley concluded that such an effort would be

a landmark in R.L.D.S. sponsored scholarship [and it] presents a unique opportunity to turn the attention and respect of the factions toward the Reorganized Church. This could be a ministry of reconciliation as well as scholarship. Here is a chance to “call them in” to our headquarters for a cooperative study of our documentary sources of a scripture basic and relevant to us all.⁵⁷

Similar to others outside the RLDS Church hierarchy, Bradley’s letters reveal that he was unfamiliar with the perceived difficulties administrators were wrestling with regarding the *Inspired Version* and the nature of Joseph Smith’s revelatory activities, as explored in the Davies report.

55. Howard to Sherry, reprinted in appendix A, point 4.

56. John W. Bradley to First Presidency, November 15, 1966.

57. John W. Bradley to First Presidency, November 15, 1966.

In early December, Howard again wrote President Smith regarding Bradley's communication. Howard forcefully stated "as custodian of these MSS, my concern in this matter could be considered of a primary nature." Howard maintained his former position of denying Matthews access to the original *Inspired Version* manuscripts and concluded, "There is much, much more at stake here than Mr. Matthews' sincerity and integrity."⁵⁸ While Howard's denials were, at that time, set in a context of balancing his many responsibilities as Church Historian and guardian over the manuscripts, he would eventually be the one to open the way for Matthews to finally examine the documents and to facilitate his research.

There was another undercurrent that affected the direction of the RLDS Church in its developing approach to issues concerning the New Translation. Increasingly, members struggled with a perceived change in Church direction on the translation and expressed their displeasure. In April 1967, Church Education leader Don Landon forwarded a letter from William Wilson, a disgruntled member in Maine, to the First Presidency regarding a visiting Church leader's use of the Phillips translation of the Bible rather than the *Inspired Version*. Landon noted, "It is this kind of viewpoint that creates considerable difficulties in the field and suggests the urgency of our need to educate the Saints regarding the place and purpose of the Inspired Version."⁵⁹

The First Presidency clarified that while the Church affirmed the inspiration of the *Inspired Version*, "it has never claimed that this work was in every way complete or that it fully compensates for the various inadequacies of the King James or other versions of the Scriptures. Since this is true, it is hardly possible to conclude that loyalty to the church and its message requires the exclusive use of the Inspired Version by our priesthood or members." The letter went on to cite the value of modern scholarly translations that also may have been blessed by "the ministry of the Holy Spirit" and thus are of use to "all who diligently seek with the prayer of faith and in the spirit of humility the greatest clarity of understanding."⁶⁰

Two months later, in June 1967, the First Presidency clarified the matter further in a letter to Richard Counts. Counts had earlier expressed his serious disillusionment over the Church's published references from the Revised Standard Version of the Bible in the *Saints' Herald*. His letter challenged President Smith with the responsibility to hold up the *Inspired Version* as the "only true Bible."⁶¹ In response, the First Presidency

58. Richard P. Howard to W. Wallace Smith, December 6, 1966.

59. William Wilson to First Presidency, April 13, 1967.

60. First Presidency to William Wilson, April 19, 1967.

61. Richard Counts to First Presidency, April 5, 1967.

expressed appreciation for the sincerity of Counts and the right for him to hold his personal beliefs but that such did not necessarily reflect the position of the Church. The First Presidency went on to note that “a great deal of study has been done on the origin of the manuscript of the Inspired Version . . . and from time to time you will be enlightened in this regard as articles occasionally appear.” While they affirmed a “large degree of divinity in the work of Joseph Smith,” still, “there is nothing which prescribes the exclusive use of the Inspired Version.”⁶²

By the end of 1967, several studies of the *Inspired Version* appeared in print. In September, the Department of Religious Education published a “Position Paper” titled “The Nature of Scripture and Its Use in the Life of the Church.” That was joined by F. Henry Edwards’s three significant articles digesting findings from the Davies report for the general membership in the *Saints’ Herald* of November and December.⁶³ Additionally, several other educational publications in Church periodicals had been presented to members just as F. Henry Edwards of the First Presidency had recommended.

In 1968, Howard was wrapping up preparation on his forthcoming study of the New Translation and other “restoration scriptures,” which became a landmark in RLDS publications. The Davies study and Howard’s extensive research had culminated in “an accurate, detailed examination and evaluation of the Inspired Version” envisioned by Church leaders three years earlier.⁶⁴

Entries in the letter file became less frequent after this, with only eleven items between 1968 and the close of the file in 1975—and most of those dealt with minor publication concerns.

Matthews Receives Permission

With so much having been accomplished by 1968, along with the firm position of the First Presidency about not “suppressing access to historical sources,”⁶⁵ the stage was set to reconsider Matthews’s requests. Matthews distinctly remembered receiving permission in a phone conversation with

62. First Presidency to Richard Counts, June 12, 1967.

63. “The Bible in the Early Restoration,” *Saints’ Herald*, November 15, 1967, 762–64, 768; “The publication of the Inspired Version of the Holy Scriptures,” *Saints’ Herald*, December 1, 1967, 804–6; and “The Inspired Version Today,” *Saints’ Herald*, December 15, 1967, 843–45.

64. Spencer to First Presidency, March 18, 1965.

65. First Presidency to Richard P. Howard, October 1, 1965. See also Edwards to Smith, December 29, 1965, and First Presidency to Bradley, October 21, 1966.

Howard in late spring 1968. And on June 20, Matthews finally made his first visit to see the New Translation manuscripts and “marked Bible.”⁶⁶ He recalled: “I wrote [Howard] and said, ‘If I came to Independence, would you show me the manuscript?’ And he wrote back and said yes. I thought he didn’t understand, so I called him on the phone. He said, ‘Yes, yes. You can come.’ That’s how I finally got to see the manuscript.”⁶⁷

For years, Matthews simply thought that Davies and other RLDS Church administrators did not want to accommodate his interests. Little did he know that Howard was actually writing most of the denial letters on behalf of the Church. Charles Davies died in November 1965, and shortly afterward Richard Howard was appointed church historian. In 1968, Matthews wrote Howard hoping that a change of administration would yield a change of position. When Matthews finally received permission to view the manuscripts, it seemed to confirm this assumption. In recalling this period, he said, “I originally contacted their historian, whose name was Charles Davies, and he said no two or three times. I tried their president, who was W. Wallace Smith, and he said no two or three times. So the first real flesh-and-blood contact that I had was Richard P. Howard, who was a gentleman and a fine man and a good scholar. The first time I went there, he showed me the marked Bible.”⁶⁸ In another interview, Matthews added:

As I’ve indicated, for many years they would not let me see the original manuscript. But they had a change of personnel, and sometimes that makes a big difference in any organization. The former historian had passed away, and a new man came in, Richard P. Howard. He had different views. He had a master’s degree in history from Berkeley, and when I wrote to him and asked if I could come, he said yes.⁶⁹

But it was not, in reality, a simple “change of administration” that opened the door for Matthews’s study of the manuscripts. By 1968, those changes that had been largely stimulated by the completion of major studies and publications on the translation were also augmented by technologically adequate photo duplication capability, which finally allowed for a preservation copy of the manuscripts, thus removing a significant access obstacle. Additionally, since the *Inspired Version* was no longer the only Church-sanctioned Bible translation, it became less important to protect and limit access to the fragile manuscripts. Indeed, such limitations increasingly

66. Baugh, “Teacher, Scholar, Administrator,” 126. Also see Howard to Sherry, reprinted in appendix A, point 2.

67. Hauglid and Huntington, “Robert J. Matthews and His Work,” 32.

68. Hauglid and Huntington, “Robert J. Matthews and His Work,” 33.

69. Baugh, “Teacher, Scholar, Administrator,” 125–26.

came to be viewed by administrators as contrary to the best interests of the RLDS Church.

The stage was set and Matthews's persistence and reputation placed him in a position to benefit from the times. His access to the manuscripts and studies that followed changed the course of LDS history. For LDS

Concerning the JST, Robert J. Matthews declared: "Every person who has joined the Church since 1831 has been affected by the JST, even though he or she did not know it. It was in the JST where the revelation was first given on the age of accountability for baptism. Then, in 1832, the revelation on the three degrees of glory was an outgrowth of his work with the Bible. Most of what we know about Adam and Melchizedek and eternal marriage and priesthood organization originated in the JST. There are many things that were outgrowths of revelation received while he was working with the Bible. It is a very prominent and important part of our history, and it ought to be a part of our present understanding. With the footnotes and the appendix in our edition of the Bible, I think the decision has already been made by the Brethren that the JST should be a part of our scripture study. Had it not been so, it would never have been put in this new edition of the Bible."

In analyzing the process Joseph Smith went through as he worked on the JST, Brother Matthews further explained: "There is a great lesson for all of us in that because in reading the Bible and concentrating, praying, and meditating, the Prophet Joseph received revelation. That is the way the Lord teaches the gospel to His people. When you study the scriptures, you are going to learn and receive revelation. The Prophet Joseph was inspired to make many corrections and alterations, as well as to add much new background information in various places in the Bible. Reading the JST is like having Joseph Smith for a study companion because you get his views on how he understood certain things."

Source: Ray L. Huntington and Brian M. Hauglid, "Robert J. Matthews and His Work with the Joseph Smith Translation," *Religious Educator*, 5 no. 2:45-46.

Church leaders, Matthews's experience and scholarly publications resolved doubts and removed "the last logical obstacle to the use of the Prophet's work on the inspired translation."⁷⁰ Though unexpected at the outset, Matthews's eventual corpus of publications was not limited only to verifying textual accuracy, as he initially intended. His many scholarly studies, along with those of others who followed, led the LDS Church to a renewed position of respect and value for the doctrinal and historical contributions made by Joseph Smith in his Bible revision. Indeed, for the LDS Church, the New Translation has been perceived as one of the great evidences affirming the divinity of Joseph Smith's role as "a seer, a translator, a prophet" (LDS Doctrine & Covenants 21:1).

This historic change has been captured well in two statements by Elders Neal A. Maxwell and Dallin H. Oaks of the LDS Church's Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. During the preparation of the *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, a question came to Elder Maxwell about the appropriateness of frequent references to the JST in that publication. He responded, "I do not know of any of the present First Presidency or Quorum of the Twelve who question in any way the use of quotations from the Joseph Smith Translation. . . . I believe they would be disappointed if you did not use [it] extensively. As you may have noted, I frequently use the Joseph Smith Translation in my own writings, as do others of my brethren."⁷¹ And Elder Oaks added that while it is not canonized, "there should be no doubt about the current status of the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible. . . . As a member of the royal family of scripture it should be noticed and honored on any occasion when it is present."⁷²

After Joseph Smith's death, his wife Emma and their son Joseph Smith III, along with subsequent RLDS Church leaders and historians, kept the sacred commandment to "preserve in safety" and to publish the New Translation.⁷³ Additionally, the RLDS letter file dealing with the *Inspired Version* of the Bible shows how Robert J. Matthews played a critical role in making available to the LDS Church the Prophet's biblical revision—"a work destined to be greater and have more significance than any of us have yet realized."⁷⁴

70. Dallin H. Oaks, "Scripture Reading, Revelation, and Joseph Smith's Translation of the Bible," in *Plain and Precious Truths Restored*, 10.

71. Elder Neal A. Maxwell to Daniel H. Ludlow, cited in Ludlow, "The Old Testament: A Witness for Christ," a speech delivered at the Fifteenth Annual Church Educational System Symposium, August 13–15, 1991, at Brigham Young University.

72. Oaks, "Scripture Reading, Revelation, and Joseph Smith's Translation of the Bible," 13.

73. Community of Christ D&C 42:15a; Latter-day Saint D&C 42:56.

74. An assessment by Elder Bruce R. McConkie, "The Doctrinal Restoration," 10.

Throughout his career, Robert J. Matthews (1926–2009) published on a wide variety of topics, but he is often remembered most for his pioneering research on the Joseph Smith Translation. The following articles that he authored or coauthored appeared in *BYU Studies*:

“‘A Plainer Translation’: Joseph Smith’s Translation of the Bible; A History and Commentary,” 16, no. 2 (1976).

“The ‘New Translation’ of the Bible, 1830–1833: Doctrinal Development during the Kirtland Era,” 11, no. 4 (1971).

“The Bernhisel Manuscript Copy of Joseph Smith’s Inspired Version of the Bible,” 11, no. 3 (1971).

“Joseph Smith’s Revision of the Bible,” 10, no. 4 (1970).

“Some Significant Texts of Joseph Smith’s Inspired Version of the Bible,” 9, no. 2 (1969).

“A Study of the Text of Joseph Smith’s Inspired Version of the Bible,” 9, no. 1 (1969).

In conclusion, Matthews’s developing reputation as a scholar, along with his persistent interest in and efforts to gain access to the original New Translation manuscripts, occurred during a period in RLDS Church history that included evolving views relative to the publication, assessment, and use of the *Inspired Version*.⁷⁵ Those developments, along with advances in archival preservation of the original manuscripts, resulted in the phone call with RLDS Church Historian Richard Howard, allowing Matthews to study the documents. Ironically, as the RLDS Church’s interest in and commitment to Joseph Smith’s revelations decreased, they rose to new prominence in the LDS Church.

75. For a Community of Christ assessment of Matthews and this period of RLDS history, see “A Community of Christ Perspective on the JST research of Robert J. Matthews: An Interview with Ronald E. Romig,” *The Religious Educator*, Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 5 no. 2 (2004): 49–55.

Thomas E. Sherry (who can be reached via byustudies@byu.edu) is LDS Institute Director in Corvallis, Oregon, for the Church Education System. He earned his EdD in Educational Psychology from BYU. His dissertation, “Attitudes, Practices, and Positions Toward Joseph Smith’s Translation of the Bible: A Historical Analysis of Publications, 1847–1987,” was completed in 1988.

Appendix A

Richard Howard's Response (January 4, 2006)

Editor's note: This article was reviewed by the Community of Christ archivist, Ronald E. Romig, and former Church Historian, Richard P. Howard, prior to its publication. Howard was invited to respond, and this appendix contains the complete text of his comments.

Hi Tom,

Ron Romig sent me a copy of your forthcoming article on the background of Robert Matthews' efforts to gain access to the Joseph Smith Bible Revision [JSBR] manuscripts, and his work on the book that he wrote about the "Plainer Translation" after he finally did gain that access. I have a few comments that may shed just a little light on the subject of your paper.

1. Charles Davies finished his report to the RLDS First Presidency in the spring of 1965, just weeks before his health failed. I was appointed acting historian in late June of that year. The implications of the Davies report were far reaching, in that an effort by the RLDS Council of Twelve to sponsor a church-wide festival, or institute, in honor of the centennial of the publication of the first edition of the JSBR, was sidetracked by the First Presidency's concern over the need for a thoroughgoing revisionism with respect to historic claims for the JSBR the RLDS church had been making for a whole century. Most of those claims, it seemed to me at the time (1965) were untenable, in light of the Davies study conclusions, which I shared. I had done much of the initial surveying and calendaring of the various manuscripts and fragments. Because the conclusions were so opposed to the traditional views and assessments, I was feeling quite uncertain about granting access to the manuscripts until more formal handling of the Davies conclusions could go forward, and this would take time. I viewed this process as largely internal in nature.

2. The original MSS of the JSBR were at many points deteriorating, and offered a real challenge in terms of microfilming or other types of photoduplication. Davies and I had been working since the summer of 1962 with professional photographers in Kansas City, trying to produce a useful photoduplication. We were unsuccessful, and it was not until 1968 that the Xerox copyflow process in Kansas City could be implemented to make a satisfactory photoduplication of most of the MSS. It was only then, after the careful calendaring and identification of the contents of each page of the MSS had been achieved, that we could proceed with making the duplication, which would be used for most research purposes. And it was only then that I felt easy about opening up the JSBR MSS for scholarly access. That was

when I phoned Robert Matthews to invite him to use the JSBR MSS and the marked KJV Bible.

3. Toward the end of 1966, my study began into the JSBR MSS, with the hope of offering the RLDS church the possibility of a lower criticism of the JSBR text. That context was crucial to whatever conclusions might emerge from such critical study, and could offer the RLDS population a revisionism from past polemics that could bear the weight of such a transition. I was in no hurry to have other scholars working on those materials simultaneously, at least until I should be able to make substantial progress towards publication of a study.

4. My resistance to giving Matthews or anyone else access, in retrospect, was forcefully put in the context of every argument I could muster, as I was needing time to get the photoduplication successfully achieved before opening this archival treasure to general research by whoever might come along to do their analyses. My resistance was also, with the gift of hindsight, a little too strong. But in any case I could not in good conscience open those MSS until they could be researched, for the most part, in photoduplication. And that could not have happened before 1968. We had already done this with the Book of Mormon printers MS, in 1966, and those papers were available, had anyone come along to do the research.

5. The Jacques Pement/Dr. Farmer request was unfortunately put to me right in the midst of this dilemma of photoduplication limitations. Mr. Pement, on the School of the Restoration faculty, an RLDS affiliate, wanted to have the manuscripts available to him in his office there, about two miles from the archives, as he could not find time to come in during archival hours to do his work on some New Testament parts of the JSBR MSS. I would not permit the original papers to leave the archives, so gave him instead some pre-Xerox duplications of the pages he needed, produced by the headquarters Visual Arts photographer/technicians. We agreed that he would have these photocopies for a period of several months, and then return them to me after that period. When that date came Mr. Pement had not yet used the photocopies. He was very upset that he could not keep them in his office indefinitely, as he had been unable to begin his research during the agreed-to time period. He reacted negatively to church officials at headquarters.

I trust that these comments may have some value to your finalization of your paper. At least you know a little more about the grounds of my position on the matter from 1965 to 1968.

Sincerely yours,
 Richard P. Howard
 historian emeritus, Community of Christ

Appendix B

The Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints: Offices & Department Figures, 1957–75

A number of figures from RLDS administrative offices are mentioned in the letters quoted from in the article and for whom some identification may be helpful:

First Presidency Presidents

Israel A. Smith (1946–1958)
W. Wallace Smith (1958–1978)

First Presidency Counselors

F. Henry Edwards (1946–1966)
W. Wallace Smith (1950–1958)
Maurice L. Draper (1958–1978)
Duane E. Couey (1966–1982)

Apostles

F. Henry Edwards (1922–1946)
W. Wallace Smith (1947–1950)
Duane Couey (1960–1966)
Aleah G. Koury (1966–1980)
Geoffrey F. Spencer (1984–1994;
President, 1990–1994)

Presidents of High Priests Quorum

Geoffrey F. Spencer (1974–1984)

Office of Presiding Bishop

G. Leslie DeLapp (1931–1966)
Walter N. Johnson (1966–1972)
Frances E. Hansen (1972–1978)

Church Historians

John Blackmore (1950–1959)
Charles Davies (1960–1965)
Richard P. Howard (1966–1994)

Assistant Church Historians

Richard P. Howard (1959–1965;
Acting Historian, 1965–1966)

Office of Church Education

Donald Landon
Wayne Ham

Church Publishing, Herald House

Chris B. Hartshorn
Audrey Stubbart
Kenneth L. Graham
Roger Yarrington
Paul A. Wellington

Covered Wagons

Like fleece shorn in the wind
They tumble and come,
White in the grass and the sage.

—Clinton F. Larson

A Child's Eye

Mirrors of Greece and the Sinaic
Rise of man ride in the verticle sea:
The purple fathoms with ancient candor
The variable mask of the world, the wonder
It whelmed in a rift of darkness, free
As a falcon untethered and climbing, called back,
Back, the call, the rapier call of the child.

—Clinton F. Larson

Legal Insights into the Organization of the Church in 1830

David Keith Stott

While much has been written about the organization of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in upstate New York, questions remain regarding the events of April 6, 1830. This article examines the organizational events of the Church from a legal perspective. In the nineteenth century, individuals desiring to form a church had two legal alternatives: forming a religious corporation or organizing a religious society. Understanding the requirements of each and considering which legal entity the Church would have preferred provide new insights into the organizational events.

Historical Background

In June 1829, shortly after Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery received the Aaronic Priesthood, they were commanded by revelation to organize a church.¹ Received ten months before the organization, this revelation outlined a rough agenda for the future meeting and commanded Joseph and Oliver to defer this organization until those who had been or would be baptized could meet together and sanction such an event.²

Around noon on Tuesday, April 6, 1830, over fifty persons gathered in the small two-room farmhouse of Peter Whitmer Sr. to witness the organization of the Church of Christ.³ After opening the meeting with prayer, the twenty-four-year-old Joseph Smith called on the brethren present to show whether they accepted him and Oliver Cowdery as their “teachers in the things of the Kingdom of God” and whether they should be organized as a church.⁴ After a unanimous vote, Joseph ordained Oliver by the laying on of hands to the office of elder, after which Cowdery in turn ordained him to the same office.⁵ They then oversaw the administration of the sacrament

David Keith Stott

I first became interested in Church history while serving as a Latter-day Saint missionary in and around Kirtland, Ohio. As an English-speaking missionary, I considered the Restoration topics I studied on my mission to be the “foreign language” I acquired while serving.

The basis of this article originated from a class I attended while a student at the J. Reuben Clark Law School at Brigham Young University. In the course, entitled “Joseph Smith and the Law,” Professors John W. Welch and Jeffrey N. Walker challenged the law students to apply historical legal studies to the events of the Restoration. I held a particular interest in corporate law and sought to determine the type of legal entity the Church formed in 1830. Writing this article was a welcome distraction from studying for the New York bar exam. Thankfully, it was not too much of a distraction; I am now an attorney practicing law in New York City.



and confirmed those present who had previously been baptized, giving them the gift of the Holy Ghost.⁶ Joseph also received a revelation and ordained others to priesthood offices.⁷ Joseph states that “we dismissed with the pleasing knowledge that we were now individually, members of, and acknowledged of God, ‘The Church of Jesus Christ,’ organized in accordance with commandments and revelations.”⁸

Laws Regarding the Formation of Nineteenth-Century Religious Corporations

Not only were the events of that day spiritually meaningful to members of the Church, but the actions taken were also legally significant. The early leaders of the Church apparently were aware of these legal implications as they tried to obey the laws of the land in organizing a church.⁹ In seeking out what legally took place on April 6, 1830, historians have assumed that the Church attempted to incorporate, and they cite an 1813 New York statute

entitled *An Act to Provide for the Incorporation of Religious Societies*.¹⁰ But upon closer examination, the historical evidence, as well as the purposes and benefits of religious corporations, fails to align with the act of incorporation, suggesting that the Church never incorporated in New York.

In nineteenth-century New York, a corporation was a legal entity “composed of individuals united under a common name, the members of which succeed[ed] each other” so that the entity continued unchanged despite an evolving membership.¹¹ Various types of corporations existed,¹² including religious corporations, which were composed of “spiritual persons”¹³ who took “a lively interest in the advancement of religion”¹⁴ and who took the steps to incorporate.

The literature of that era refers to three main benefits that flowed to a church by being incorporated. First, religious corporations maintained a perpetual succession with trustees carrying out the original purpose of the church despite an ever-changing membership or the passage of time.¹⁵ Second, this “immortality” allowed for the religious corporation to manage “with more facility and advantage, the temporalities belonging to the church or congregation.”¹⁶ Without corporate status, the property of the church was owned by individual members, and the church did not possess “the power to transfer the privileges given to it to other persons” when the owning members died.¹⁷ Alternatively, a corporation was “considered as *one person*, which has but one will”¹⁸ and could transfer property upon death with relative ease.¹⁹ Third, religious corporations had various legal rights including the power to make contracts, to have a common seal, and to use the corporate name,²⁰ all allowing for easier property management.

State laws varied on how a congregation could form a religious corporation.²¹ New York updated its incorporation statute in 1813, entitled *An Act to Provide for the Incorporation of Religious Societies*, which detailed how a church could self-incorporate.²² Section Three of the Act stated that to form a religious corporation, the congregation should gather to elect between three and nine trustees:

It shall be lawful for the male persons of full age . . . to assemble at the church, meeting-house, or other place where they stately attend for divine worship, and, by plurality of voices, to elect any number of discreet persons of their church, congregation or society, not less than three, nor exceeding nine in number, as trustees, to take the charge of the estate and property belonging thereto, and to transact all affairs relative to the temporalities thereof.²³

Trustees played a key role in a religious corporation. Similar to directors of present-day corporations, trustees were managing officers responsible for

the temporal affairs of the church.²⁴ The church vested all property in these trustees, who held it for the use and benefit of the congregation.²⁵

The main event at incorporation meetings was the election of these trustees. New York's statute described the formalities of this election:

And that at such election, every male person of full age . . . shall be entitled to vote, and the said election shall be conducted as follows: the minister of such church . . . shall publicly notify the congregation of the time when, and place where, the said election shall be held . . . ; that on the said day of election, two of the elders . . . to be nominated by a majority of the members present, shall preside at such election, receive the votes of the electors, be the judges of the qualifications of such electors, and the officers to return the names of the persons who, by plurality of voices, shall be elected to serve as trustees for the said church, congregation or society.²⁶

The minister of the religious society gave notification of the upcoming election at least fifteen days beforehand, including two successive Sabbaths.²⁷ The notice was very simple, merely requiring that the time and place of the election be given.²⁸ By a voting majority, the congregation was to select two elders to preside over the election, tally votes, and announce the winning trustees.

The statute also required certification with the county clerk:

And the said returning officers shall immediately thereafter certify, under their hands and seals, the names of the persons elected to serve as trustees . . . in which certificate the name or title by which the said trustees and their successors shall forever thereafter be called and known, shall be particularly mentioned and described; which said certificate, being proved or acknowledged as above directed, shall be recorded as aforesaid; and such trustees and their successors shall also thereupon, by virtue of this act, be a body corporate, by the name or title expressed in such certificate; and the clerk of every county for recording every certificate of incorporation by virtue of this act, shall be entitled to seventy-five cents, and no more.²⁹

The trustees were required to certify the incorporation by filing a document containing the names of the trustees, giving the official title by which the corporation would be known, and paying a fee. Upon the certificate being recorded, the organizing church officially became a religious corporation.

Evidence That the Church Probably Did Not Incorporate

Three reasons become apparent as to why the early Church probably did not incorporate itself on April 6, 1830: (1) incorporation would have required an organizational structure incompatible with that of the Church; (2) the early Church would not have received any tangible benefits for which other churches would have traditionally sought incorporation; and (3) historical evidence does not align with several of the statute's main requirements.

First, the trustee system of incorporated churches would have forced an organizational framework that was not in accordance with the preferred leadership structure of the early Church. In religious corporations, power was disbursed between three to nine trustees, who led by democratic majority vote. This system did not comport with the single office of a prophet who was to lead the Church. According to at least one account, on April 6, 1830, Joseph Smith was ordained *the* prophet, seer, and revelator for the Church, plainly the sole leader of the new organization.³⁰ Oliver Cowdery was likewise Joseph's unequivocal second-in-command. These two men, with Joseph foremost, were to lead the Lord's Church through revelation, not three to nine trustees who governed by majority vote.³¹

Second, most of the benefits of forming a religious corporation would not have enticed the early Church. As mentioned above, religious corporations primarily formed to enjoy perpetual succession and easier property management.³² Such benefits would not have concerned Church leaders in 1830 due to the Church's financial state. The Church did not own any property, such as buildings or land. Rather, the Saints used public creeks and rivers to perform baptisms and members' homes, schools, or other churches as meetinghouses.³³ Perpetuity and simplified property management are of little advantage when a church holds no assets. The minimal tangible benefits combined with a forced organizational structure likely would have dissuaded the early Church leaders from incorporating.

Additionally, eyewitness accounts of the organizational meeting and descriptions of subsequent Church operation only modestly resemble the statutory requirements of New York's law. While the early Saints followed a few of the following minor requirements, the more essential portions of the statute appear to not have been followed on April 6, 1830.

The statute required that "male persons of full age . . . assemble at the church, meeting-house, or other place where they statedly attend for divine worship."³⁴ The Saints met in the home of Peter Whitmer Sr., a locally influential farmer residing in Fayette, New York.³⁵ Despite not being an actual church, the home of a member appears to be a valid setting for an ecclesiastical election; other churches during that time period likewise chose to incorporate in the house of a member.³⁶ But the Whitmer home does not appear to be where the Saints "statedly attend[ed]" for divine worship. The Church held no formal meetings there before April 6, 1830,³⁷ and after organization the Church met at various locations, including two different schoolhouses, various churches, and other members' homes.³⁸ However, the Whitmer home was the location of three subsequent general conferences, which implies that when the early members needed a formal meeting place, they chose the Whitmer home. Additionally, Joseph Smith resided there at the time of organization, and it was thus essentially the headquarters of the

Church.³⁹ Such a setting would probably qualify as an appropriate location for incorporation under the statute.

The statute further required that the minister “publicly notify the congregation of the time when, and place where, the said election shall be held.”⁴⁰ Joseph Smith’s manuscript history states, “[We] made known to our brethren, that we had received commandment to organize the Church And accordingly we met together for that purpose, at the house of Mr Whitmer.”⁴¹ Joseph states that he gave such notification, which is also evidenced by the sizable number in attendance at the organizational meeting.

The location and the notice requirements constitute the extent of clear similarities between the statute and the accounts of the Church’s organization. Additional requirements only tangentially align with the descriptions given of the meeting.

For example, the statute requires the election of two elders to preside over the election. “Two of the elders . . . [shall be] nominated by a majority of members present . . . [to] preside at such election, receive votes of the electors, . . . and the officers to return the names of the [elected trustees].”⁴² A seemingly parallel event is found when the congregation on April 6, 1830, voted on Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery: “[Joseph] proceeded . . . to call on our brethren to know whether they accepted us as their teachers in the things of the Kingdom of God To these they consented by an unanimous vote.”⁴³ But such an election was not for Joseph and Oliver to be temporary officers who would preside, run, and tally an election of a board of trustees. The congregation sustained Joseph and Oliver as *the* leaders of the Church. There is no record of any electoral judges being chosen.

Perhaps of most significance is the absence of any actual election of trustees. The statute states that “male persons of full age . . . [shall elect three to nine] trustees, to take the charge of the estate and property belonging thereto, and to transact all affairs relative to the temporalities thereof.”⁴⁴ In the accounts of April 6, 1830, there is no mention of any election of trustees. Since the central purpose of an incorporation meeting was to elect these trustees, this silence is informative. Scholars point to the six original members of the Church as evidence of statutory compliance with this requirement.⁴⁵ But the accounts refer to them simply as “members,” not trustees. Further, these six original members played a minimal role in the organizational meeting; in fact, their names were only recorded several decades afterwards.⁴⁶ Also, after the organization these six original members do not appear to collectively perform any typical trustee duties such as the buying and selling of property or the creation of bylaws for the Church.⁴⁷ The statute clearly demonstrates that the decision-making power of a religious corporation should lie *in the trustees* after incorporation, while in reality, Joseph Smith maintained sole decision-making power as prophet.

Finally, the statute required that the officers “certify, under their hands and seals, the names of the persons elected to serve as trustees, . . . [and] the name or title by which the said trustees and their successors shall forever thereafter be called and known.”⁴⁸ No one has ever found the Church’s incorporation certificate that was to be filed with the county clerk. Two historians in particular have meticulously searched to no avail for the certificate of incorporation in several government offices and courthouses in upstate New York.⁴⁹ While it is not unusual for historical documents to go missing and never be found again, historians not only have failed to find the actual certificate but also have not found any record that the county clerk ever received such certification or the requisite fee—separate notations that the clerk would have made in addition to filing the certificate.⁵⁰ This absence comes despite records of several other churches filing certificates during the time period.⁵¹

In summary, the only clear similarities between the statute and the events of April 6, 1830, appear to be Joseph Smith giving notice to the members of the Church to meet at the Whitmer home, a place where the Saints would typically gather. Otherwise, there are only seeming coincidences in the numbers of elders and electoral judges and of original members and trustees. While this could merely show a lack of awareness or compliance with the statute, it is more likely that the Saints were simply not trying to incorporate, as shown below.

New York Religious Incorporation Statute	Fulfilled on April 6, 1830?
Congregation assembles at the church, meetinghouse, or other place where church meets to worship	Yes The Whitmer home could qualify, although the Whitmers had never hosted a formal Church meeting before April 6, 1830.
Minister gives notice of meeting to congregation	Yes Joseph Smith gave notice of the upcoming meeting to the Saints.
Two elders elected to preside at election of trustees, judge the trustees’ qualifications, and return the names of winners	No While Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery were sustained as leaders of the Church, there is no record that they ever presided over the election of any trustees.
Three to nine trustees elected to take over church’s property and transact church’s affairs	No Documents list six elders as original members, but there is no record that the congregation voted on them, and they did not perform trustee-like duties afterward.
Certificate filed with county clerk	No No one has found such a certificate.

Seeing the Church as an Unincorporated Religious Society

Stronger evidence suggests that on April 6, 1830, Joseph Smith organized the Church as an unincorporated “religious society.” First, in the nineteenth century, formation of a religious society often preceded incorporation. Second, the organizational events of the Church closely align with the customary methods that other churches followed for creating new religious societies. Third, early statements regarding the organization of the Church support the creation of a religious society. These facts lead to the likely conclusion that the Church did not incorporate in New York but instead formed an unincorporated religious society.

Religious societies were regularly-operating churches that did not hold corporate status. The legal definition of a religious society was “a voluntary association of individuals or families . . . united for the purpose of having a common place of worship, and to provide a proper teacher to instruct them . . . and to administer the ordinances of the church.”⁵² Essentially, religious societies comprised all unincorporated churches.

A religious society could be created by anyone wishing to form one’s own church. Unlike religious corporations, in 1830 no federal or state statutes regulated the formation of religious societies. Rather, formation was determined “by usage,” or in other words, according to the policies and customs of each church.⁵³ In the 1830s, it was the common practice to create a religious society before incorporating.⁵⁴ In fact, nineteenth-century incorporation statutes were drafted with the presumption that such a statute would be applied to a preexisting religious society.⁵⁵ If early Church leaders were aware of such a practice, they would have opted to form a religious society and not a corporation.

The organizational events of the Church align with customary methods that other churches followed for creating new religious societies. Unlike religious corporations, in 1830 the formation of a religious society was regulated by the individual policies and customs of each church, not by legislative statutes.⁵⁶ Most new societies formed local branches of larger existing religions, such as the Baptist, Episcopal, Methodist, and Presbyterian faiths, whose mother churches had detailed policies that the new religious societies were to follow to effectively organize (see appendix 3 below). Alternatively, a new church not being formed as a branch of an existing denomination had no restrictions on how it could form. By examining the instruction that other churches gave regarding how to form new congregations, one can understand the customary method for forming a religious

society which Joseph Smith possibly employed. The events of the organization of the LDS Church align with the guidelines of these other churches.

One of the leading faiths in upstate New York was Presbyterianism.⁵⁷ To guide the growth of the church in new communities like Palmyra, the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church printed pamphlets and treatises specifying how to form new congregations.⁵⁸ The organization of a new Presbyterian religious society occurred as follows. Individuals were to send a petition to the presbytery that would appoint two ruling elders to organize the church.⁵⁹ The two ruling elders, “having given due notice to the persons who are to compose the new congregation of the time and place of meeting . . . [would] converse with all who propose[d] to unite in forming the congregation; and being satisfied with their religious attainments and character, . . . on the day appointed for the organization, [would] publicly receive them.”⁶⁰ The organizational meeting was to begin with the “usual exercises of public worship,”⁶¹ or “devotional exercises, conducted by the presiding minister,”⁶² followed by the election of the ruling elders.⁶³ Only “male communicating members” in the church could be elected as elders, who after election were ordained to their offices.⁶⁴ This was accomplished when one of the elders asked the congregation, “Do you the members of this congregation acknowledge and receive this brother as a Ruling Elder . . . in this church . . . ?”⁶⁵ The members then responded “in the affirmative, by holding up their right hands” and then witnessed the setting apart of the elder by prayer.⁶⁶ Baptisms also commonly played a role in such events.⁶⁷

The Methodist Church published similar guidelines. Methodists were among the earliest to organize in the Palmyra area and enjoyed tremendous growth during Joseph Smith’s youth due to the success of Methodist circuit riders.⁶⁸ In rural areas, these itinerant preachers rotated through different areas of the country, opting for camp meetings in forest groves or barns rather than in formal meetinghouses.⁶⁹ The actual formation of a congregation often had to wait until a preacher was willing to permanently minister to a congregation. The church counseled that “persons desiring to organize themselves . . . [should] apply to a Methodist preacher, having regular pastoral charge near them, who receives them as members of the church . . . on profession of their faith. The preacher then enrolls their names in the general register of his charge,” and “when these steps have been taken, the society is duly constituted, and becomes an organic part of the church, and has regular pastoral care.”⁷⁰

The Baptist Church was also prominent in the Palmyra area and had a local membership of several hundred in the 1820s.⁷¹ They grew

quickly, “primarily by converting unchurched Americans,” and relied on uneducated lay ministers to staff their congregations.⁷² A key tenet of the Baptist faith focused on the independence of each congregation.⁷³ The method for organizing a Baptist religious society was thus, not surprisingly, free of many formalities and could differ from society to society. One treatise describes the loose requirements as follows: “When a number of Christians, members of the same or of different churches, believe that their own spiritual improvement, or the religious welfare of the community so requires, they organize a new church. This is done by uniting in mutual covenant, to sustain the relations and obligations prescribed by the Gospel. . . . Articles of faith are usually adopted, as also a name by which the church shall be known, and its officers elected.”⁷⁴

The Episcopal Church in the United States, formerly known as the Church of England, also instructed new members on how to form a congregation.⁷⁵ Like the Baptist Church, the Episcopal Church gave general instructions for formation without any rigid formalities. The congregation was to give notice of an upcoming organizational meeting and at such meeting adopt articles of association, assume a suitable name, and elect officers.⁷⁶

Comparability to the Organization of the LDS Church

The organizational events of April 6, 1830, align quite closely with the customary methods for organizing a religious society as prescribed by these other churches.

Notice was given to the membership. Joseph Smith informed his brethren of the revelation commanding him to organize a church.⁷⁷ Both the Presbyterian and Episcopal churches required notice be given to the prospective membership of a religious society. The prospective leadership gave “due notice to the persons who [were] to compose the new congregation of the time and place of meeting.”⁷⁸

Ruling or leading elders were elected. Joseph Smith called on the brethren present to know whether they accepted him and Oliver Cowdery as “their teachers in the things of the Kingdom of God.”⁷⁹ Each of the four other churches elected their officers at their organizational meetings. The April 6 election of Joseph and Oliver is most similar to the Presbyterians’ subscribed meeting, which included the election of two “ruling elders.” Oliver and Joseph respectively ordained one another as elders on April 6, 1830,⁸⁰ with Joseph being the “first elder” and Oliver the “second elder.”⁸¹ Compare also the question asked at a Presbyterian service (“Do you the

members of this congregation acknowledge and receive this brother as a Ruling Elder . . . ?”⁸²) with Joseph Smith’s description of the election (“[We called] on our brethren to know whether they accepted us as their teachers in the things of the kingdom of God”⁸³). Presbyterians then answered in the affirmative by raising their right hands,⁸⁴ a practice similar to that of the LDS Church.

The organization was accompanied by usual exercises of public worship. The April 6 meeting opened with prayer and, after the election of elders, included the administration of the sacrament as well as “time spent in witnessing.”⁸⁵ Each of these portions of the meeting could be considered parts of a normal worship service, similar to the Presbyterian organizational meeting that began with the “usual exercises of public worship” and “devotional exercises.”⁸⁶

Ordinations, baptisms, and confirmations were then performed. In addition to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery being ordained to the office of elder by the laying on of hands, others were called and ordained to priesthood offices. The leaders then confirmed members of the Church and gave them the gift of the Holy Ghost.⁸⁷ After the meeting, “several persons who had attended . . . [became] convinced of the truth, came forward shortly after, and were [baptized].”⁸⁸ This coincides with the practice of the Baptist and Episcopal churches, who similarly ordained other officers and accepted additional members into their church through baptism on the days of organization.

An official church name was given, membership recorded, and articles of regulation were soon put in place. After the organizational meeting, the Church was officially known as “The Church of Christ.”⁸⁹ Similarly, the Baptist and Episcopal churches both required that the congregation designate a suitable name for each church that organized.⁹⁰ Also, at the organizational meeting, Joseph Smith received a revelation which called for a record to be kept among the Church.⁹¹ The Methodist Church likewise kept a record after organizing which included a “general register” of the members of the church. Note also the role of the Articles and Covenants of the Church, which represent a declaration of the doctrine and practices that the newly organized Church would follow—in essence a constitution or bylaws for the new church.⁹² Correspondingly, the Episcopal Church required the reading and adoption of articles of association at their organizational meetings, and the Baptist Church required that articles of faith be adopted. While it is unknown how much, if any, of the Articles and Covenants was read at the organizational meeting,⁹³ they were accepted

by the Church in a June conference, and the focus of early Church leaders on composing these articles aligns with the customary practice of other denominations. In summary, the events of the LDS organizational meeting aligned with the customs of coexisting churches seeking to form a religious society.

Customary Elements of Other Churches' Organizational Meetings	Similar Element Found in Organization of LDS Church?	
Notice given to membership	Yes	Joseph Smith notified the brethren that he "had received commandment to organize the Church."
Election of ruling elders	Yes	A sustaining vote was taken as to whether the congregation accepted Joseph and Oliver as their leaders.
Usual exercises of public worship	Yes	Members oversaw the administration of the sacrament, prophesied, and witnessed.
Ordinations, baptisms and confirmations	Yes	Joseph and Oliver ordained elders and others to priesthood offices, confirmed members, and performed baptisms.
Official church name, membership and constitution	Yes	D&C 20 was received prior to organization, the "Church of Christ" was adopted as the official name, and a commandment was received to keep a record.

Historical Statements in Context

Finally, viewing the organization of the Church from the perspective of forming a religious society aligns well with the historical statements made by its earliest members. Indeed, the absence of any historical reference to incorporation in any of the accounts of April 6, 1830, is revealing. There exists no statement from any eyewitness or early Church member describing the event as an act of "incorporation." The events were instead consistently referred to as the "organization" or "organizing" of the Church, terms typically used to describe a formation of a religious society.⁹⁴ If the leaders of the Church were familiar with the statutory difference between incorporation and organization, their use of the word "organization" is significant.

While Church members did not refer to the incorporation statute, they did refer to the organization being done according to the laws of the land. The Articles and Covenants describe the organization being done "agreeable to the laws of our country."⁹⁵ Additionally, in 1887 David Whitmer stated that the Church was formed according to the "laws of the land":

The reason why we met on that day was this; the world had been telling us that we were not a regularly organized church, and we had no right to officiate in the ordinance of marriage, hold church property, etc., and that we should organize according to the laws of the land. On this account we met at my father's house in Fayette, N.Y., on April 6, 1830, to attend to this matter of organizing according to the laws of the land.⁹⁶

These statements have motivated scholars to look for a statute that the Saints were trying to comply with and implement—a specific “law of the land.” But reference to the organization being accomplished “according to the laws of the land” can just as well be construed as a declaration that the organization was done “legally” or “in a customary manner,” not necessarily according to a specific statute.⁹⁷ Whitmer’s overall concern appears to have been that community members were criticizing their lack of any legal organization whatsoever. Forming a religious society would have quelled such criticism.⁹⁸

Further, Whitmer specifically mentions the Church lacking the authority to marry and hold church property. Both of these acts could be done by a religious society. The ability to perform marriages was not exclusively held by religious corporations but could be performed by a minister of any religious society,⁹⁹ and the members of an organized religious society could hold property on the congregation’s behalf.¹⁰⁰

A number of statements by subsequent Church members show a misunderstanding of New York’s legal requirements for organizing a church.¹⁰¹ These statements have since caused confusion regarding the Church’s formation, most notably the reason for having six original members. As an example of one of these statements, the Apostle Erastus Snow stated the following in 1873:

At that time there existed in the State of New York a legal statute forbidding anybody to minister in spiritual things, except a regularly recognized minister, and which also provided, that any six believers had the right to assemble to organize a religious body. After inquiring of the Lord, and to enable him to minister lawfully, the Prophet Joseph was commanded to enter into an organization; it was therefore on the 6th of April, 1830, that this statute was complied with, and the Church became recognized by the laws of the State of New York.¹⁰²

A number of problems exist in this statement regardless of whether the church incorporated or not. No portion of the religious incorporation statute, or any statute for that manner, forbade the exercise of “spiritual things” by nonministers. Additionally, the thought that there must be six believers to organize a religious body is also mistaken. There was no numerical requirement to form a religious society, and the incorporation statute required between three and nine, not six exactly.¹⁰³ Statements like

Elder Snow's have led historians to believe that the number of original members held legal significance.¹⁰⁴ Such was not the case. Unfortunately, understanding the Church's organization as that of a religious society rather than a corporation fails to shed light on why Joseph chose to recognize six men as members, other than that it was probably not because any statute or law required it.

Conclusion

In the nineteenth century, church members could legally form a new congregation through two methods: the creation of a religious corporation or the organization of a religious society. While historians have long assumed Joseph Smith created a religious corporation on April 6, 1830, it is more likely he created a religious society when he organized the Church. Considering the Church's condition in 1830, forming a religious society clearly met the Church's needs and avoided an undesirable leadership structure. Additionally, the recorded accounts of the organizational meeting lack conformity with the incorporation statute's requirements but strongly resemble the customary methods of how other churches formed religious societies.

Understanding the legal status of the newly organized Church places the events of April 6, 1830, in a clearer context. Nearly every aspect of the Church's organizational meeting was a typical practice of the Baptist, Episcopal, Methodist, or Presbyterian churches.¹⁰⁵ This not only shows that the early Church members did comply with the law in organizing, but also possibly explains why they chose to include certain actions in the meeting.¹⁰⁶

After the meeting, Joseph records that he felt "acknowledged of God, 'The Church of Jesus Christ,' organized in accordance with commandments and revelations."¹⁰⁷ Not only did Joseph organize the Church according to the laws of the land, but he obeyed God's commandments in doing so. The Church's organization was thus done according to both the laws of God and man.

Appendix 1

Excerpt from Manuscript History of the Church, A-1, Joseph Smith Papers, LDS Church Archives, Salt Lake City, as reproduced in Dean C. Jessee, ed., *The Papers of Joseph Smith*, 2 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1989–92), 1:302–3

Whilst the Book of Mormon was in the hands of the printer, we still continued to bear testimony, and give information, as far as we had opportunity; and also made known to our brethren, that we had received commandment to organize the Church And accordingly we met together for that purpose, at the house of the above mentioned Mr Whitmer (being

six in number) on Tuesday the sixth day of April, AD One thousand, eight hundred and thirty.

Having opened the meeting by solemn prayer to our Heavenly Father we proceeded, (according to previous commandment) to call on our brethren to know whether they accepted us as their teachers in the things of the Kingdom of God, and whether they were satisfied that we should proceed and be organized as a Church according to said commandment which we had received. To these they consented by an unanimous vote. I then laid my hands upon Oliver Cowdery and ordained him an Elder of the “Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.” after which he ordained me also to the office of an Elder of said Church. We then took bread, blessed it, and brake it with them, also wine, blessed it, and drank it with them. We then laid our hands on each individual member of the Church present that they might receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, and be confirmed members of the Church of Christ. The Holy Ghost was poured out upon us to a very great degree. Some prophesied, whilst we all praised the Lord and rejoiced exceedingly. Whilst yet together I received the following commandment.

Revelation to Joseph Smith Jr, Given at Fayette, Seneca Co N Y. April 6th 1830.

[D&C 21]

We now proceeded to call out and ordain some others of the brethren to different offices of the Priesthood, according as the Spirit manifested unto us; and after a happy time spent in witnessing and feeling for ourselves the powers & the blessings of the Holy Ghost, through the grace of God bestowed upon us, we dismissed with the pleasing knowledge that we were now individually, members of, and acknowledged of God, “The Church of Jesus Christ,” organized in accordance with commandments and revelations, given by him to ourselves, in these last days, as well as according to the order of the Church as recorded in the New Testament.

Appendix 2

An Act to Provide for the Incorporation of Religious Societies, in *The Revised Statutes of the State of New York* (1836, enacted February 5, 1813), 206–208

§ 3. And be it further enacted, That it shall be lawful for the male persons of full age, belonging to any other church, congregation or religious society, now or hereafter to be established in this state, and not already incorporated, to assemble at the church, meeting-house, or other place where they statedly attend for divine worship, and, by plurality of voices, to elect any number of discreet persons of their church, congregation or society, not less than three, nor exceeding nine in number, as trustees, to take

the charge of the estate and property belonging thereto, and to transact all affairs relative to the temporalities thereof; and that at such election, every male person of full age, who has statedly worshipped with such church, congregation or society, and has formerly been considered as belonging thereto, shall be entitled to vote, and the said election shall be conducted as follows: the minister of such church, congregation or society, or in case of his death or absence, one of the elders or deacons, church wardens or vestrymen thereof, and for want of such officers, any other person being a member or a stated hearer in such church, congregation or society, shall publicly notify the congregation of the time when, and place where, the said election shall be held, at least fifteen days before the day of election; that the said notification shall be given for two successive Sabbaths or days on which such church, congregation or society, shall statedly meet for public worship, preceding the day of election; that on the said day of election, two of the elders or church wardens, and if there be no such officers, then two of the members of the said church, congregation or society, to be nominated by a majority of the members present, shall preside at such election, receive the votes of the electors, be the judges of the qualifications of such electors, and the officers to return the names of the persons who, by plurality of voices, shall be elected to serve as trustees for the said church, congregation or society; and the said returning officers shall immediately thereafter certify, under their hands and seals, the names of the persons elected to serve as trustees for such church, congregation or society, in which certificate the name or title by which the said trustees and their successors shall forever thereafter be called and known, shall be particularly mentioned and described; which said certificate, being proved or acknowledged as above directed, shall be recorded as aforesaid; and such trustees and their successors shall also thereupon, by virtue of this act, be a body corporate, by the name or title expressed in such certificate; and the clerk of every county for recording every certificate of incorporation by virtue of this act, shall be entitled to seventy-five cents, and no more.

Appendix 3

Excerpts from Other Religious Societies' Pamphlets and Rules Regarding the Formation of Religious Societies

Presbyterian

Form of Government and General Administration: *Prescribed Rules for Organizing a United Presbyterian Congregation* (quoted in William Lawrence, "The Law of Religious Societies and Church Corporations," *American Law Register* 21 [June 1873]: 363 n. 56).

When a congregation becomes too numerous to meet conveniently in one place for public worship, or when for any other reason it would promote the general interests of the church to organize a new congregation, the persons so judging shall make application to the Presbytery, within whose bounds they reside, setting forth the necessity or propriety of such organization. Whenever application for this purpose is made, notice shall be given by the Presbytery to the session of the congregation, that may be affected by the new organization, before the petition is granted.

If after hearing the reasons, the Presbytery determines to grant the application, it shall appoint a minister and two ruling elders, if practicable, to carry the object into effect; and they having given due notice to the persons who are to compose the new congregation of the time and place of meeting for said purpose, shall, after the usual exercises of public worship, proceed to hold an election for the proper officers.

When the persons who are to compose the new congregation are already members of the church in full communion, the election of officers shall be conducted as in congregations already organized.

But when the applicants are not in communion, the minister shall converse with all who propose to unite in forming the congregation; and being satisfied with their religious attainments and character, he shall, on the day appointed for the organization, publicly receive them by proposing the questions usually proposed to applicants for membership. The election shall then be conducted in the prescribed way.

When the election is over, the minister shall announce to the congregation the names of the persons elected; and on their agreeing to accept the office, and having been examined by him as to their qualifications for, and their views in undertaking it, a day shall be appointed for their ordination, the edict served, and the ordination conducted as in other congregations.

The presiding minister shall report to the Presbytery his procedure in the case, with the names of the officers who have been chosen and ordained. And these with the name of the congregation shall be entered on the Presbytery's list.

Methodist

Mode of Organizing a New Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church as determined by Usage (quoted in William Lawrence, "The Law of Religious Societies and Church Corporations," *American Law Register* 21 [September 1873]: 364 n. 56).

If in a certain neighborhood there are persons desiring to organize themselves into a Christian Society in accordance with the rules and usages of the M. E. Church, how is such organization effected?

They apply to a Methodist preacher, having regular pastoral charge near them, who receives them as members of the church, either by written certificate of their good standing in some other society, or on profession of their faith. The preacher then enrolls their names in the general register of his charge, and in a class-book which he gives to one of them whom he appoints as leader of the class. The leader represents them in the Quarterly Conference.

When these steps have been taken, the society is duly constituted, and becomes an organic part of the church, and has regular pastoral care. And this care is perpetuated from year to year by the appointment of a pastor by the bishop at the session of the Annual Conference in whose bounds such society is situated.

If this society have a house of worship, or propose to erect one, a board of trustees must be created in accordance with the laws of the state or territory to hold the property in trust for said society. These trustees must be approved by the Quarterly Conference of the Circuit of which such society is a part. And to be admitted, the charter, deed or conveyance of such house of worship, must contain the trust required by the discipline of the church.

Baptist

Edward T. Hiscox, *The Baptist Directory: A Guide to the Doctrines and Practices of Baptist Churches* (New York: Sheldon & Company, 1876), 17.

When a number of Christians, members of the same or of different churches, believe that their own spiritual improvement, or the religious welfare of the community so requires, they organize a new church.

This is done by uniting in mutual covenant, to sustain the relations and obligations prescribed by the Gospel, to be governed by the laws of Christ's house, and to maintain public worship and the preaching of the Gospel. Articles of faith are usually adopted, as also a name by which the church shall be known, and its officers elected.

Episcopal

Murray Hoffman, *A Treatise on the Law of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States* (New York: Stanford and Swords, 1850), 246.

Whenever any number of persons shall associate to form an Episcopal congregation, they shall . . . acknowledge and accede to the constitution, canons, doctrine, discipline, and worship of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States . . . ; they shall assume a suitable name by which their church or parish shall be designated, and appoint not less than three nor more than eleven vestrymen and two wardens. . . .

The form of an organization of a parish is this: “We the subscribers, assembled for the purpose of organizing a parish of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the town of ____ . . . , after due notice given, do hereby agree to form a parish, to be known by the name of ____ church, and as such do hereby acknowledge and accede to the constitution and canons of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America, and the constitution and canons of the same Church in the diocese.

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1. Dean C. Jessee, ed., *The Papers of Joseph Smith*, 2 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1989–92), 1:302: “Whilst the Book of Mormon was in the hands of the printer, we . . . made known to our brethren, that we had received commandment to organize the Church And accordingly we met together for that purpose, at the house of the above mentioned Mr Whitmer (being six in number) on Tuesday the sixth day of April, AD One thousand, eight hundred and thirty.” See also appendix 1.

No contemporary documentation or minutes of the April 6, 1830, meeting exist, making a precise accounting of the organizational events difficult. The most detailed source is Joseph Smith’s Manuscript History, as set forth in Jessee, *Papers of Joseph Smith*. This account is an 1839 transcript recorded by one of Smith’s scribes, James Mulholland, nine years after the organization of the Church.

2. Larry C. Porter, “Organizational Origins of the Church of Jesus Christ, 6 April 1830,” in *Regional Studies in Latter-day Saint Church History: New York*, ed. Larry C. Porter, Milton V. Backman Jr., and Susan Eastman Black (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1992), 152, quoting Joseph Smith Jr., *History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 2d ed., rev., 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1971), 1:60–61: “We had not long been engaged in solemn and fervent prayer when the word of the Lord came unto us in the chamber, commanding us that I should ordain Oliver Cowdery to be an Elder in the Church of Jesus Christ; and that he also should ordain me to the office; and then to ordain others, as it should be made known unto us from time to time. We were, however, commanded to defer this our ordination until such times as it should be practicable to have our brethren, who had been and who should be baptized, assembled together, when we must have their sanction to our thus proceeding to ordain each other, and have them decide by vote whether they were willing to accept us as spiritual teachers or not; when also we were commanded to bless bread and break it with them; and then attend to the laying on of hand for the gift of the Holy Ghost, upon all those whom we had previously baptized,

doing all things in the name of the Lord.” David Whitmer was also present during this revelation.

3. The Lord possibly commanded that the specific date of April 6 be used for organization. See the introduction to Doctrine and Covenants 20: “We obtained of him [Jesus Christ] the following, by the spirit of prophecy and revelation; which not only gave us much information, but also pointed out to us the precise day upon which, according to his will and commandment, we should proceed to organize his Church once more here upon the earth.” This statement is curious in light of the Book of Commandments and Revelations, which dates Section 20 as recorded on April 10, 1830, suggesting that the revelation was written, or at least recorded, after the organizational meeting.

Larry C. Porter has thoroughly examined prospective individuals who attended the organizational meeting. David Whitmer estimated the number at fifty, although as many as seventy-three could have been in attendance. See Porter, “Organizational Origins,” 153–55. Some scholars have recently called into question the location of the organizational meeting. It is generally accepted that the meeting took place in the home of Peter Whitmer Sr. in Fayette, New York. However, until 1834 the *Evening and Morning Star* referred to the Church being organized in Manchester, New York. See, for example, “Prospects of the Church,” *Evening and Morning Star* 1 (March 1833): 76; and “Rise and Progress of the Church of Christ,” *Evening and Morning Star* (April 1833): 84. For advocates of the Manchester site, see H. Michael Marquardt and Wesley P. Walters, *Inventing Mormonism: Tradition and the Historical Record* (Salt Lake City: Smith Research Associates, 1994), 154–56; and Dan Vogel, comp. and ed., *Early Mormon Documents*, 5 vols. (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1996), 1:92 n. 82.

4. Jessee, *Papers*, 1:302–3: “Having opened the meeting by solemn prayer to our Heavenly Father we proceeded, (according to previous commandment) to call on our brethren to know whether they accepted us as their teachers in the things of the Kingdom of God, and whether they were satisfied that we should proceed and be organized as a Church.”

5. Jessee, *Papers*, 303: “To these they consented by an unanimous vote. I then laid my hands upon Oliver Cowdery and ordained him an Elder of the ‘Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.’ after which he ordained me also to the office of an Elder of said Church.” Oliver Cowdery later described ordaining Joseph Smith as “Prophet, Seer, Revelator, and Translator just as [Doctrine and Covenants 21] says.” *True Latter Day Saints’ Herald*, August 1, 1872, 473. This article recounts an 1847 interview of Oliver Cowdery by William E. McLellin in Elkhorn, Wisconsin.

6. Jessee, *Papers*, 303: “We then took bread, blessed it, and brake it with them, also wine, blessed it, and drank it with them. We then laid our hands on each individual member of the Church present that they might receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, and be confirmed members of the Church of Christ.” It is unclear whether only the six original members of the Church or all in attendance who had been previously baptized were confirmed.

7. See Doctrine and Covenants 21; Jessee, *Papers*, 303.

8. Jessee, *Papers*, 303.

9. See Doctrine and Covenants 20:1: “The rise of the Church of Christ in these last days, . . . it being regularly organized and established agreeable to the laws of our country”; see also notes 95–96 below and accompanying text.

10. See, for example, Porter, "Organizational Origins," 155–58; Larry C. Porter, *A Study of the Origins of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the States of New York and Pennsylvania* (Provo, Utah: Joseph Fielding Smith Institute for Latter-day Saint History and BYU Studies, 2000), 100, 155; see also John K. Carmack, "Fayette: The Place the Church Was Organized," *Ensign* 19 (February 1989): 15; Larry C. Porter, "Organization of the Church," in *Encyclopedia of Latter-day Saint History*, ed. Arnold K. Garr, Donald Q. Cannon, and Richard O. Cowan (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2000), 877–81; Daniel H. Ludlow, "Organization of the Church, 1830," in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, ed. Daniel H. Ludlow, 4 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1992), 3:1049; and W. Jeffrey Marsh, "The Organization of the Church," in *Joseph: Exploring the Life and Ministry of the Prophet*, ed. Susan Easton Black and Andrew C. Skinner (Deseret Book, 2005), 120.

11. J. Bouvier, *A Law Dictionary*, rev. 6th ed. (1856), 2 vols., accessed at <http://inclusion.semitagui.gov.co/Publications/Bouviers/bouvier.htm>, s.v. "Corporation." A corporation thus maintained "a perpetual succession" and enjoyed a "sort of immortality." John Holmes, *The Statesman, or Principles of Legislation and Law* (Augusta, Maine: Severance Dorr, Printers, 1840), 226. To understand the benefits of this corporate immortality, compare corporations to partnerships which would necessarily dissolve after the death or departure of one of the partners. See Bouvier, *Law Dictionary*, s.v. "Partnership": "The law will not presume that it shall last beyond life." See also note 19 below for the typical headaches surrounding a nonincorporated entity's property succession.

Throughout this article, no contemporary histories regarding the law of incorporating churches in the 1830s are cited because none exist. Thus, the author focuses strictly on early statutes and primary sources. Broad histories that detail the development of the laws of the incorporation or organization of business associations are largely irrelevant to the incorporation of churches, which faced a dissimilar developmental path.

12. In the nineteenth century, corporations were divided into private and public categories, public corporations being those owned and operated by the government. Bouvier, *Law Dictionary*, s.v. "Corporation." Private corporations were further categorized into religious and lay categories. Holmes, *Statesman*, 226; James Kent, *Commentaries on American Law*, 4 vols., 14th ed. (Boston: Little, Brown, 1896), 2:274; Joseph K. Angell and Samuel Ames, *A Treatise on the Law of Private Corporations Aggregate* (Boston: Hilliard, Gray, Little and Wilkins, 1832), 25.

13. Holmes, *Statesman*, 226.

14. Angell and Ames, *Treatise on the Law*, 25. Religious corporations must have "created [the corporation] with a view of promoting religion and perpetuating the rights of the church." Holmes, *Statesman*, 226. Also, the purpose of religious corporations must have been entirely ecclesiastical. See Angell and Ames, *Treatise on the Law*, 26, providing the example that even if Dartmouth College was composed entirely of ecclesiastical persons, because the object of a school was not "entirely ecclesiastical," it could not be a religious corporation and was thus an eleemosynary (charitable) corporation.

15. See Holmes, *Statesman*, 226. This perpetual succession was a main function of all corporations. In the United States Supreme Court case *Dartmouth College v. Woodward*, Justice Marshall commented that corporations allow for "a perpetual succession of individuals [which] are capable of acting for the

promotion of the particular object, like one immortal being.” 4 Wheaton, (U.S.) R. 636 (1819). In a subsequent case, Justice Marshall further stated, “The great object of an incorporation is to bestow the character and properties of individuality on a collective and changing body of men.” *Providence Bank v. Billings*, 4 Peters, (U.S.) R. 562 (1830). Religious corporations were no different; the church could exist indefinitely and continue long after any one member passed on while maintaining the purpose and integrity of the original institution.

16. Kent, *Commentaries*, 2:275.

17. Angell and Ames, *Treatise on the Law*, 7.

18. Angell and Ames, *Treatise on the Law*, 7, emphasis in original.

19. Angell and Ames, *Treatise on the Law*, 7, emphasis in original: “If, for example, a grant of land should be made to twenty individuals not incorporated, the right to the land cannot be assured to their successors, without the inconvenience of making frequent and numerous conveyances. When, on the other hand, any number of persons are consolidated and united into a corporation, they are then considered as *one person*, which has but one will,—that will being ascertained by a majority of votes.”

20. Angell and Ames, *Treatise on the Law*, 277–92.

21. Churches could form a religious corporation in two ways. R. H. Tyler, *American Ecclesiastical Law: The Law of Religious Societies* (Albany: William Gould, 1866), 58: “Sometimes religious societies are incorporated here by special charters, but more frequently, under general incorporating laws.” First, the government granted a “special charter” which incorporated a church. The British government employed this method in the American colonies, granting special privileges of incorporation to specific state-sponsored churches. See generally Paul G. Kauper and Stephen C. Ellis, “Religious Corporations and the Law,” *Michigan Law Review* 71 (1973): 1499, 1505–9, describing the influence of “the English notion that a corporation could exist only with the express prior approval of the state” (1505). This idea was adopted by the early colonies which used specific corporate grants for certain state-endorsed churches. After the American Revolution, this method fell into disfavor, and the United States adopted a more widespread method of incorporation—the enactment of “general” state incorporation laws giving churches the ability to incorporate without legislative mandate. Kauper and Ellis, “Religious Corporations and the Law,” 1509–10: “The difficulties inherent in any system that grants special favors to a few led to the downfall of incorporation by special charter. It seems probable that the spirit of separation and pluralism that swept the country at the time of the American Revolution lent aid to the enactment of general incorporation laws.”

22. Religious Incorporations, “An Act to Provide for the Incorporation of Religious Societies,” in *The Revised Statutes of the State of New York* (1836, enacted Feb. 5, 1813), at 206; hereafter New York Religious Incorporation Statute. See appendix 2 for the full text of section 3 of this statute.

23. New York Religious Incorporation Statute § 3. Other sections of the statute set forth detailed obligations such as requiring the board of trustees to serve three-year terms and be re-elected to stay in office (§ 6), limiting trustee powers (§ 8) and the number of trustees who could serve (§§ 3, 9), and mandating certain administrative responsibilities (§§ 7, 9).

24. Sandford Hunt, *Laws Relating to Religious Corporations* (New York: Nelson and Phillips, 1876), iv: “The relation which the trustees bear to the corporation is not that of private trustees to the *cestuis que trust*, but that of directors to a civil corporation. They are managing officers of the corporation, invested, as to its temporal affairs, with such particular powers as are specified in the statute.”

25. See Kauper and Ellis, “Religious Corporations and the Law,” 1511: “The trustee form [of general incorporation statutes] was initially adopted in most eastern states. It consisted of a body of trustees, usually elected by the congregation, which was incorporated as a unit. All church property was vested in the corporate body, which held it for the use and benefit of the church, congregation, or society involved. This form grew out of the common law practice of using trustees to hold property for a voluntary association incapable of taking or holding property in its own name.”

26. New York Religious Incorporation Statute, § 3.

27. Tyler, *American Ecclesiastical Law*, 85: “This notification must be given for two successive Sabbaths, or days on which such church, congregation or society shall stately meet for public worship,” or in other words, “at least fifteen days before the day of such election.”

28. Tyler, *American Ecclesiastical Law*, 85: “This notice is a very simple one, and no form of it need be given.”

29. New York Religious Incorporation Statute, § 3.

30. See note 5 above. The earliest recorded revelation we have in which the Lord unequivocally states that Joseph Smith alone was the Lord’s mouthpiece came in the summer of 1830. See Doctrine and Covenants 28:1–7. Until then, Oliver Cowdery could arguably have been considered a joint-holder of the Melchizedek Priesthood keys with Joseph. See, for example, Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, 3 vols., comp. Bruce R. McConkie (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1954), 1:212: “Oliver Cowdery’s standing in the beginning was as the ‘Second Elder’ of the Church, holding the keys jointly with the Prophet Joseph Smith.” Even this two-person organization would not comport with the trustee requirements of the statute.

31. Additionally, incorporation did not come without strings attached. Fulfilling New York’s incorporation requirements invited government regulation, although the enforcement of such requirements is questionable in that area of the state. Because corporations enjoyed perpetual succession, the legislature placed a limit on the amount of property that churches could hold each year. New York Religious Incorporation Statute, § 12, states that religious corporations could “have, hold, and enjoy lands, tenements, goods and chattels of the yearly value of three thousand dollars.” Incorporated churches were also required to get state approval before any purchase of property. New York Religious Incorporation Statute, § 11; see also Angell and Ames, *Treatise on the Law*, 183: “No religious corporation can sell any real estate without the Chancellor’s order.” If Church leaders were aware of such restrictions, they might have been reluctant to invite such oversight without significant benefits from incorporation.

32. See notes 15–20 above.

33. See Porter, “Study of the Origins,” 100–101; see also note 38 below and accompanying text.

34. New York Religious Incorporation Statute, § 3.

35. See note 3 above.

36. Porter, "Study of the Origins," 159, citing a Seneca County Courthouse record book recording the incorporation certificate of the Methodist Episcopal Society "held at the House of Benjamin Kenny in the Village of Seneca Falls . . . on the 6th day of January 1829."

37. The Church held its first public discourse (by Oliver Cowdery) on April 11, 1830, and held the first conference of the Church two months after organization, on June 1, 1830, both at the Peter Whitmer Sr. home. See Jessee, *Papers*, 304, 307.

38. Porter, "Study of the Origins," 100.

39. See, for example, Keith W. Perkins, "From New York to Utah: Seven Church Headquarters," *Ensign* 52 (August 2001), which states, "Wherever the prophet of the Lord was, there was the headquarters of the Church."

40. New York Religious Incorporation Statute, § 3.

41. See Jessee, *Papers*, 302.

42. New York Religious Incorporation Statute, § 3.

43. See Jessee, *Papers*, 302–3.

44. New York Religious Incorporation Statute, § 3.

45. See, for example, Porter, "Study of the Origins," 159: "The writer would again like to emphasize that in a majority of the accounts referring to the organization of the LDS Church, the number six is stressed as the automatic number required by New York State Law to incorporate. . . . It appears that Joseph Smith arbitrarily selected six individuals to assist in meeting the requirements of the law."

46. See, for example, Porter, "Study of the Origins," 98–99, citing lists of the original six members by Joseph Knight Jr. in 1862 and David Whitmer in 1887. Note the discrepancy between the two lists, one citing Samuel H. Smith and the other John Whitmer, lending further evidence to the minimal role the original six members played. See generally Richard Lloyd Anderson, "Who Were the Six Who Organized the Church on April 6, 1830?" *Ensign* 10 (June 1980): 44–45.

47. New York Religious Incorporation Statute, § 3.

48. New York Religious Incorporation Statute, § 3.

49. Porter, "Study of the Origins," 155–60; Carmack, "Fayette," 15.

50. Porter, "Study of the Origins," 156. Dr. Porter speculates that either the founders submitted the certificate and it was lost and never recorded or that "the initial press of business and the increasing opposition locally somehow stayed them from executing the document formally in a court of law."

51. Porter, "Study of the Origins," 155–56.

52. Tyler, *American Ecclesiastical Law*, 54. See also Bouvier, *Law Dictionary*, s.v. "Society": "A society is a number of persons united together by mutual consent, in order to deliberate, determine, and act jointly for some common purpose."

53. William Lawrence, "The Law of Religious Societies and Church Corporations," *American Law Register* 21 (June 1873): 537, emphasis in original: "It is a general rule that every person of proper intellectual capacity, may unite with others assenting thereto, in perfecting the organization of a religious society according to the forms required by the ecclesiastical faith and church government which may be adopted." See also Lawrence, "The Law of Religious Societies," 362–63: "A particular religious society may be organized with an appropriate number of members as a new and original congregation. . . . In all such cases there are

in many of the different denominations proceedings or forms to be observed, in obedience to regulations prescribed or resulting from usage." See also Lawrence, "Law of Religious Societies," 541: "There can be but little practical necessity for any legal provision by statute to authorize or regulate this form of organization. It is created as at common law by such written articles of association as religious societies may adopt or may rest in parol." This aligns with religious societies' legal similarities to partnerships, which could be formed by any express act of the partners. See Bouvier, *Law Dictionary*, s.v. "Partnership": "Partnerships are created by mere act of the parties; and in this they differ from corporations which require the sanction of public authority, either express or implied."

54. The organization of the Church occurred before a larger movement developed to incorporate churches throughout the United States. Colonial churches seldom incorporated, primarily because the use of general statutes of incorporation did not yet exist. Joseph Stancliffe Davis, *Essays in the Earlier History of American Corporations* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1917), 79–80; see also note 21 above. Into the 1870s, a "large proportion of all the religious societies in many of the states [were still] unincorporated," Lawrence, "Law of Religious Societies," 540. By the turn of the twentieth century, the majority of churches in America incorporated. See "Incorporation of Religious Societies," *Columbia Law Review* 5 (February 1905): 154: "At present a majority of the religious societies in this country conduct their affairs under a franchise [civil corporation]." The LDS Church organized before this movement to incorporate gained momentum, and organizing without incorporation would have been common for a church in 1830.

55. Note the very title of New York's incorporation statute: "An Act to Provide for the Incorporation of Religious Societies." See also Lawrence, "Law of Religious Societies," 548, emphasis in original: "The statutes [authorizing incorporation] generally contemplate a prior *ecclesiastical* organization." The statute's requirements also presume the incorporation of a preexisting religious society. It called for the election to be held at the typical place of worship, and the minister was to publish notice to the congregation at least two Sundays in advance. New York Religious Incorporation Statute, § 3. Also, the trustees were active males chosen from the general body of the church and were to take charge of the church's estate and property. New York Religious Incorporation Statute, § 3. These requirements only seem sensible if a previously operating church was applying for incorporation.

56. See note 53 above and accompanying text.

57. Milton V. Backman, *Joseph Smith's First Vision: The First Vision in its Historical Context* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1980), 66–69. Due to the renewed religious interest incited by the Second Great Awakening, the Presbyterian Church in Palmyra divided into two congregations in 1817. Several members of Joseph Smith's family, including Lucy, Hyrum, and Samuel, regularly attended one of these congregations, the Western Presbyterian Church, during Joseph's youth. Backman, *Joseph Smith's First Vision*, 69.

58. See, for example, *Report of a Committee of the General Assembly, Appointed for Revising the Form of Government, and the Forms of Process of the Presbyterian Church, in the United States of America* (Philadelphia: Thomas and William Bradford, 1819), including on the title page, "Ordered to be Printed for the Consideration of the Presbyteries"; see also Lawrence, "Law of Religious Societies," 363 n. 56; Benjamin F. Bittinger, *Manual of Law and Usage* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian

Board of Publication, 1888), 30–35; W. H. Workman, *Presbyterian Rule, Embracing the Form of Government, Rules of Discipline, and Directory for Worship, in the Presbyterian Church in the United States* (Richmond, Va.: Presbyterian Committee of Publication, 1898), 21–27.

59. Lawrence, “Law of Religious Societies,” 363 n. 56, quoting *Prescribed Rules for Organizing a United Presbyterian Congregation*.

60. Lawrence, “Law of Religious Societies,” 363 n. 56.

61. Lawrence, “Law of Religious Societies,” 363 n. 56.

62. Bittinger, *Manual of Law and Usage*, 31.

63. *Report of a Committee of the General Assembly*, 10; Workman, *Presbyterian Rule*, 23.

64. *Report of a Committee of the General Assembly*, 10.

65. *Report of a Committee of the General Assembly*, 10.

66. *Report of a Committee of the General Assembly*, 10.

67. Bittinger, *Manual of Law and Usage*, 32; Workman, *Presbyterian Rule*, 22.

68. Backman, *Joseph Smith's First Vision*, 57, 70.

69. Backman, *Joseph Smith's First Vision*, 70–71.

70. Lawrence, “Law of Religious Societies,” 364 n. 56.

71. Backman, *Joseph Smith's First Vision*, 64–65.

72. Backman, *Joseph Smith's First Vision*, 56.

73. Milton V. Backman Jr., *Christian Churches of America: Origins and Beliefs* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1976), 136.

74. Edward T. Hiscox, *The Baptist Directory: A Guide to the Doctrines and Practices of Baptist Churches* (New York: Sheldon and Company, 1876), 17.

75. Episcopalian preachers only taught sporadically in western New York at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and consequently a permanent Episcopalian congregation did not take hold in Palmyra until 1823. Backman, *Joseph Smith's First Vision*, 74–75.

76. Murray Hoffman, *A Treatise on the Law of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States* (New York: Stanford and Swords, 1850), 237–38.

77. See note 41 above and accompanying text.

78. Lawrence, “Law of Religious Societies,” 363 n. 56, quoting *Prescribed Rules for Organizing a United Presbyterian Congregation*; see also Hoffman, *Treatise on the Law of the Protestant Episcopal Church*, 246: “We the subscribers, assembled for the purpose of organizing a parish of the Protestant Episcopal Church . . . , after due notice given, do hereby agree to form a parish.”

79. Jessee, *Papers*, 302–3.

80. See note 5 above and accompanying text.

81. Doctrine and Covenants 20:2–3. Early versions of the Articles and Covenants of the Church read simply “an elder.” See Scott H. Faulring, “An Examination of the 1829 ‘Articles of the Church of Christ’ in Relation to Section 20 of the Doctrine and Covenants,” *BYU Studies* 43, no. 4 (2004): 72 n. 52. Reference to Joseph Smith as “first elder” came in the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants. Note that priesthood licenses issued at the first conference of elders on June 9, 1830, specifically designated that Joseph was the First Elder and Oliver Cowdery was the Second.

82. *Report of a Committee of the General Assembly*, 10.

83. Jessee, *Papers*, 302–3.

84. *Report of a Committee of the General Assembly*, 10.

85. Jessee, *Papers*, 303.

86. *Report of a Committee of the General Assembly*, 10.

87. See notes 4–7 above and accompanying text.

88. Jessee, *Papers*, 303.

89. See Doctrine and Covenants 20:1; 21:11; David Whitmer, *An Address to All Believers in Christ* (Richmond: 1887), 73: “In June, 1829, the Lord gave us the name by which we must call the church, being the same as He gave the Nephites. We obeyed His commandment, and called it THE CHURCH OF CHRIST.”

90. Hiscox, *Baptist Directory*, 17; Hoffman, *Treatise on the Law of the Protestant Episcopal Church*, 246.

91. See note 7 above and accompanying text; Doctrine and Covenants 21:1.

92. Composing these articles was a principal goal of early leaders. Oliver Cowdery penned an early version of the Articles and Covenants in 1829 (entitled “the articles of the Church of Christ”) and Church membership ratified the Articles and Covenants of the Church of Christ at the first conference in June 1830. See Faulring, “An Examination of the 1829 ‘Articles of the Church of Christ.’”

93. See note 3.

94. Nearly every example that the author found of instructions to new congregations regarding the formation of religious societies in the nineteenth century used “organization” or “organize” to describe the act of creation. See, for example, Lawrence, “Law of Religious Societies,” quoting Presbyterian instructions for creating a religious society that stated, “When a congregation becomes too numerous . . . it would promote the general interests of the church to organize a new congregation” (363); and quoting Methodist instructions for creating a religious society, which stated that a group could be formed “if in a certain neighborhood there are persons desiring to organize themselves into a Christian Society” (364).

95. See Doctrine and Covenants 20:1: “The rise of the Church of Christ . . . being regularly organized and established agreeable to the laws of our country.”

96. Whitmer, *Address to All Believers*, 33; see also David Whitmer, *Kansas City Daily Journal*, June 5, 1881: “On the 6th of April, 1830, the church was called together and the elders acknowledged according to the laws of New York” (Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City.)

97. An act may be consistent with the common law (the unwritten, judge-made law which derives its force from the consent and practice of the governed) and be done according to the laws of the land without any specific statute explicitly governing the action.

98. The critics pointed to a lack of formal church organization, not that the Church had failed to incorporate.

99. Nineteenth century legal treatises declared that “no peculiar ceremonies are requisite by the common law to the valid celebration of the marriage. The consent of the parties is all that is required.” Kent, *Commentaries*, 2:87. “It can be done by ministers of the gospel and priests of every denomination. . . . When performed by a minister or priest, it shall be according to the forms and customs of the society to which he belongs.” Member of the New York Bar, *The Citizen’s Law Book* (New York: Henry Ludwig, 1844), 412.

100. Religious societies were treated as “quasi-partnerships” and members of such societies could acquire, lease, and sell property on behalf of the congregation.

See Tyler, *American Ecclesiastical Law*, 55, emphasis in original: "It has however been held that property may be granted to individuals for the use of a church not incorporated." Lack of incorporation limited the transfer of property after death, and the property needed to be kept in the members' names and not that of the church, but a religious society was not forbidden from holding property. Before April 6, 1830, the Church was not even an unincorporated religious society. By "organizing," they obtained the right to perform marriages and hold property, and they satisfied the concerns outlined by Whitmer.

101. See, for example, Porter, "Study of the Origins," 159: "In a majority of the accounts referring to the organization of the LDS Church, the number six is stressed as the automatic number required by New York State Law to incorporate."

102. "Discourse by Erastus Snow," *Latter-day Saints' Millennial Star* 35 (April 22, 1873): 249–50.

103. Elder Snow did not join the Church until 1833 at the age of fourteen and was not an eye-witness to any of the events in New York. See generally Andrew Karl Larson, *Erastus Snow: The Life of a Missionary and Pioneer for the Early Mormon Church* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1971), 17–18.

104. See, for example, note 101 above.

105. The sole exception to this is Joseph Smith's receipt of a revelation.

106. The author wishes to emphasize that this article focuses solely on the legal analysis of a single event in Church history. This article was not intended to participate in any ongoing debate regarding the history of priesthood organization, Church hierarchy, and later unfolding developments. Such issues go beyond the scope of this deliberately limited article.

107. Jessee, *Papers*, 303.

Mere Mormonism

Thomas B. Griffith

Devotees of C. S. Lewis will recognize that I have adapted the title of my remarks from *Mere Christianity*, his classic exposition of the fundamentals of the Christian faith.¹ An hour lecture is not the forum to attempt for Latter-day Saint Christianity what Lewis achieved for traditional Christianity. In any event, I lack the skill to pull that off. What follows is something much more modest. I will speak from my own observation and try to identify what is at the heart of the Mormon experience in an attempt to provide an introduction to the faith. A disclaimer is needed. I am not speaking as an official representative of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. You will notice that my shirt is not white, and I wear no black nametag. I am here only as a lay member of that church to give a “reason of the hope that is in” me (1 Pet. 3:15). I confess at the outset that I would like nothing more than to say something that might spark your interest to “come and see” (John 1:39) and learn more about us.

And I will not address directly a question sometimes posed about the Mormon faith: Are Mormons Christians? By the end of this hour, however, I hope you will see why Latter-day Saints take umbrage at the suggestion that we are not. We readily acknowledge that we represent a departure from the traditional Christianity that emerged from Nicea. We claim more ancient roots, grounded in biblical Christianity, and we proclaim, with all the fervor and adoration we can muster, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the Redeemer and Savior of humankind.

In a recent essay in the online version of *The Atlantic*, Ross Douthat wrote of Christianity: “The Christian story is not . . . a theological or philosophical treatise. It’s not a set of commands or insights about our moral duties. Nor is it a road map to the good life. It has implications for all of

those questions, obviously. . . . But fundamentally, the Christian story is *evidence* for a particular idea about the universe: *It recounts a series of events that, if real, tell us something profound about the nature of God, and His relationship to His creatures.*"² That observation is especially apt during this Holy Week as Christians commemorate the Passion and the Resurrection of Christ. The teaching authority of Christianity, the foundation of its claim to have unique insights into the nature of things, is the historical reality of Christ's life, his suffering, his death, and his resurrection. Likewise, the claim of Latter-day Saint Christianity to unique authority rests on historical events. I'll speak first of those events. Then I'll turn to some insights they provide. Finally, I'll describe how those insights work together in Mormon life.

The Events

Three events give Mormonism its reason for being and its continued vitality. Like the Resurrection of Christ, each is miraculous. For some, the recency of these events makes them less plausible. Surely rational moderns can't believe in miracles! But for Latter-day Saints, these events are significant *because* they took place in modern times. They witness to God's contemporary involvement in human affairs.

Joseph Smith's First Vision. In the early nineteenth century, Joseph Smith was a teen living with his family on the frontier of western New York. Affected by the religious fervor of the Second Great Awakening, Joseph became concerned with two questions: How could he be forgiven of his sins? And was there a church uniquely authorized to carry on Christ's work? After wrestling with each question for some time, Joseph followed the injunction in the first chapter and fifth verse of the Epistle of James in the New Testament and retired to the seclusion of a grove near his home to seek answers from God through prayer. A vision ensued in which Joseph saw and spoke with God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. He was told that his sins were forgiven through the grace of Christ, a not uncommon experience for Christians of the age, and that he was not to join any existing church because God would use him to reestablish Christ's church. It was with this charge and promise that Joseph moved into uncharted territory.

Restoration of the Priesthood. Latter-day Saints call the reestablishment of Christ's church in modern times the restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Mormonism views itself as the successor to the New Testament church, which lost its way shortly after its founding by Christ and its period of apostolic leadership. Central to the Restoration, ancient prophets and apostles, now resurrected, came in bodily form—not in apparition—to Joseph Smith and others and gave them priesthood authority to organize

anew Christ's church. John the Baptist, Peter, James, John, Moses, Elijah, and other ancient worthies visited Joseph Smith and conferred on him this authority, which has remained with the Church since. In Mormon teaching, this priesthood link to Christ gives vitality to the ordinances of the Church and facilitates continuing revelation to its current apostolic leadership.

Recovery of the Book of Mormon. As part of the Restoration, an angel gave Joseph a record kept on golden plates that tells the story of a group of Hebrew pilgrims who left Jerusalem in about 600 BC to prepare for the coming of the Messiah.³ Their God-directed journey eventually led them to ancient America. (According to Mormon scholars, the best available evidence suggests they settled in Mesoamerica.) Named in recognition of its primary compiler and editor, the Book of Mormon covers roughly a thousand-year period and recounts the religious and political history of this group and its descendants.

Perhaps the most remarkable feature of the Book of Mormon is its account of a people who looked toward the birth of Christ with an anticipation that was rewarded by his personal ministry among them as risen Lord after his death and resurrection. The risen Christ taught his gospel, healed the sick, and formed a church among this group in ancient America. Joseph Smith translated the record into English through miraculous means, and it is, along with the Bible, part of the Latter-day Saint canon. The subtitle of the Book of Mormon explains its purpose: Another Testament of Jesus Christ. Mormon Apostle Jeffrey R. Holland has written, "The Book of Mormon's highest purpose is to restore to the universal family of God that crucial knowledge of Christ's role in the salvation of every man, woman, and child who now lives, has ever lived, or will yet live upon the earth."⁴

Each of these three events is remarkable for what it claims about God's purposes in modern times. Two of them are noteworthy in another way. Although the First Vision was a private encounter between a boy and God with no other witness, the restoration of the priesthood and the recovery of the Book of Mormon were not solitary experiences. They involved the participation of other people who made the same claims about what took place as did Joseph Smith. There is, for lack of a better word, a physicality about these events that removes them from the subjective realm of the visionary and, like the bodily resurrection of Christ, places them in time and space.

For example, Joseph Smith and his companion Oliver Cowdery tell that John the Baptist and Peter, James, and John literally placed hands on their heads while ordaining them to the priesthood. Smith and Cowdery *felt* those angelic hands on their heads. This is not the stuff of mystical vision or the ineffable. It is a straightforward claim that angels appeared in the clear light of day in bodily form and acted at God's direction. That is what I

mean by physicality. Likewise, Joseph wasn't the only one to see, touch, and handle the golden plates. At least eleven other people felt the plates, hefted them, and examined the writing on them. Each stood by his claim that the plates were real, which is all the more noteworthy in the case of those who later parted ways with Smith over his direction of the Church.

The Book of Mormon, whose translation was dictated by Joseph Smith in the presence of others, is not a theological treatise, but is an account of the struggles, triumphs, and tragedies of a real people. Its historicity has been the subject of a robust debate. Although believing Latter-day Saints don't rely exclusively or even primarily on scholarly works to justify their faith in the book's authenticity, they point to sophisticated literary, linguistic, anthropological, and archeological studies that lend support to the claim that the Book of Mormon could not be the product of the nineteenth century, but is, as it claims, an ancient document written by authors with Near Eastern ties.⁵

I mention this feature of the Mormon story because it suggests that the claim these events actually took place is susceptible to some rational analysis. Like the witness of first-century Christians that Jesus was physically resurrected, Mormons proclaim that God has acted in modern times in a miraculous fashion that has been seen and experienced by eyewitnesses. By subjecting these claims to rigorous scrutiny, we can make some determination whether they were more likely to have happened than not. If these events did not take place, if they are nothing more than fanciful tales concocted by an imaginative, devious, or even pious fraud, Latter-day Saints have little of worth to offer the world. We may be interesting specimens of a particular type of religious experience, but we have no claim to your attention on ultimate issues.

But if these claims are true accounts of real events—if Joseph Smith saw and talked to God and Christ, if he received priesthood authority under the hands of ancient prophets and apostles, and if he is the transmitter of ancient scripture specially prepared to bear witness of a living Christ to an increasingly secular world—then Latter-day Saint Christians have something marvelous to offer.

The Insights

From these historical events, insights emerge into the nature of God, our relationship with him, and our relationship with our fellow humans. Mormon life is built around these insights. A caveat: The trained theologian may be disappointed with the lack of systematic thought in Mormonism. We have no *Summa Theologica* and lack anything approaching a catechism. While some see this as a result of our comparative newness as a religion,

others think something more fundamental is at work. For a Latter-day Saint, the biblical imperative to love God and neighbor is foremost (Matt. 22:34–39). Our focus is on how God expects us to act and what he expects us to become. And so the insights I describe are not the products of attempts to provide a methodic explanation of the nature of God and humankind. Instead, they come from revelation incident to the effort to follow Christ in a fallen world.

The Nature of God. The most obvious point from these events is that God lives, that he has been seen by and has spoken with moderns, and that he is active in human affairs. God is not remote. He is immediate and proximate, moved by his love for us and his yearning to tutor us.

In a revelation to Joseph Smith recounting a vision God gave to Enoch, an ancient prophet mentioned only briefly in Genesis, Enoch sees the Creation and the history of humankind. The vision is interrupted, however, when Enoch notices that God is weeping. “How is it that thou canst weep,” Enoch asks in amazement, “seeing thou art holy, and from all eternity to all eternity?” (Moses 7:29). The answer, Enoch learns, is that it is in the very nature of God to weep over his creation. He weeps over you and me. In contrast to the views of the Greek philosophers who had a profound influence on the development of traditional Christian and Jewish thinking, the God Mormons worship is both personal and passible. He feels joy and sadness and even suffers. Subsequent revelations confirmed to Joseph Smith what he had learned in the First Vision: that God has a physical form. As distinctive as that teaching may be in the postbiblical world, “God’s physical form is not the point. That God has a heart that beats in sympathy with ours is the truth [we have to offer] . . . that He feels real sorrow, rejoices with real gladness, and weeps real tears.”⁶

Latter-day Saints are Trinitarians with a twist. A theologian would call our view “social trinitarianism.”⁷ From the Bible, the experiences of Joseph Smith, and the uniquely Mormon scriptures, we believe that the Trinity is composed of three separate and distinct beings: God, the Father; God, the Son; and God, the Holy Spirit. “Although the three members of the Godhead are distinct personages, their Godhead is ‘one’ in that all three are united in their thoughts, actions and purpose, with each having a fulness of knowledge, truth, and power.”⁸

Latter-day Saints affirm the reality of the bodily resurrection of Christ to a world in which faith has diminished or vanished under the withering effects of secularism. As Joseph Smith and a colleague wrote, “And now, after the many testimonies which have been given of [Christ], this is the testimony, last of all, which we give of him: That he lives! For we saw him, even on the right hand of God; and we heard the voice bearing record that

he is the Only Begotten of the Father—that by him, and through him, and of him, the worlds are and were created” (D&C 76:22–24). Mormons attest that the Atonement of Jesus Christ is not only the central act in the history of the universe, but it is the most important event in each of our lives. It is through Christ’s Atonement that God draws us to him in love and moves us towards others in love. Mormon scripture, exegesis, belief, ritual, and practice all center on the Atonement of Christ. Christ’s chief project is to prepare the world for his imminent millennial reign, hence the name of the Church: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. As it was in New Testament times, that church is directed today by Christ through apostolic leadership.

Our Relationship to God. Fundamental to understanding our relationship with God is recognizing that Christ, through the power of his Atonement, intends to transform us from fallen creatures into beings who reflect his glory. The teachings in the first chapter of 2 Peter in the New Testament, that Christ intends us to be “partakers of the divine nature” (2 Pet. 1:4), resonate with Latter-day Saints. On this point, we are most like Eastern Orthodox Christianity with its emphasis on *theosis*, the ultimate transformation of the faithful into the likeness of God.⁹ Latter-day Saints recognize the seemingly insurmountable chasm that exists between God and humans, but we believe that it is God’s work and his glory to bridge that gap through the Atonement of Christ.

And we believe that is possible not only because of what Christ has done, but also because humans are the offspring of God. All of us lived with him as spirits before birth. In this life our spirit joins our body to form the personality we will have for eternity. The nature and quality of our life to come depend on our becoming the type of person our Heavenly Father urges us to be. The chief purpose of this life is to take the initial steps in that direction. Yielding to Christ’s grace enables us to make those steps. To help us make those steps, God desires to speak with his children. It should not be surprising that in a movement that began with the prayer of a boy, personal revelation is the quintessential religious experience. Mormon meetings are filled with stories of people who have sought and received revelation in their personal and family affairs.

Because Mormons believe that our divine transformation is God’s purpose, we take conduct seriously. Our meetings are filled with exhortations about how a disciple should act and what a disciple should be. Accepting Christ as personal Savior and making him the object of one’s worship and adoration are indispensable elements of this process of transformation. But they are only the start of an eternal journey.

Our Relationship to Others. For a people who believe that God is near and that he is not silent, Latter-day Saints place surprisingly little emphasis on the contemplative life. Our primary focus, instead, is on relationships with other people. This comes in part from the belief that all humans are, quite literally, the offspring of God—a view that carries with it an optimism about human potential that encourages sociality. But this impulse toward the social is also rooted in the Mormon view that the relationships we experience in this life are but a prelude to what our lives will be like in the hereafter. Joseph Smith taught, “That same sociality which exists among us here will exist among us there, only it will be coupled with an eternal glory, which glory we do not now enjoy” (D&C 130:2).

In short, we like people, and that which we do best is build communities. The beehive, which was a common feature in nineteenth-century Mormon art and architecture, may be the closest thing we have to an icon. Our success building communities reflects, no doubt, the lessons we learned from pulling together in the face of persecution, but there is something else going on here. Mormon life is profoundly social, and activity in the Church involves us deeply in the lives of others because in Mormonism God is served best—and perhaps only—by serving others. An oft-quoted passage from the Book of Mormon teaches, “When ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only in the service of your God” (Mosiah 2:17).

How the Insights Work Together

These insights into the nature of God and humankind work together in Mormon life through the idea of covenant—the voluntary decision to bind oneself to another in a continuing relationship. Two covenants in particular help explain much of what Mormons do: baptism and marriage. Each is a covenant with God, who seeks our transformation by binding himself to us, but each is at the same time a covenant with others, people we will be tied to through eternity.

The Baptism Covenant. Baptism mimics Christ’s death and resurrection and the death of our fallen nature and our rising into a new life with him. In baptism, we bind ourselves to Christ through covenant, but, just as important in the Mormon view, we also join a community. The local Mormon congregation is called a ward. For the committed Latter-day Saint, the activities of the ward are second in importance only to family life. Typically capped at about four hundred members, the ward gathers each Sunday for members to take communion, which Latter-day Saints call the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper. In the sacrament, we renew our covenant with Christ made at baptism.

The emblems are simple: bread and water. They are passed through the congregation from one person to another. There is a democratic element to the experience. Priestly mediation is at a minimum. The sacrament is not only the most important devotional act of the week, but it is also the focal point of the communal life of the ward. From this shared experience all other ward activities flow.

Sunday is hardly a day of rest for committed Mormons. The sacrament is only one part of three hours of Sunday services. Three hours can be a bit long even for the hardest Mormon. Recently, I heard a seven-year-old in the pew behind me mark the end of the services by proclaiming, "Victory! It's the closing hymn!" In fact, the life of an active Mormon involves far more than three hours on Sunday. The phrase "religion on steroids" may be about right.¹⁰ Beyond services, Sunday is filled with activities that begin with early morning planning meetings for those with leadership responsibilities and includes choir practices, training meetings, visits to each other's homes, and evening activities for the youth. And that's just the first day of the week!

Each school day, Mormon high school students gather before school in a class for scripture study. Weeknight activities involve Scouting and service projects. Ward socials are regular features of many weekends. Mormons dance. We sing. We put on musicals. We play instruments. There are more homes with pianos per capita in Utah than any other state in the nation.¹¹ There is a reason for all this activity, beyond mere neighborliness, that is best captured by C. S. Lewis's insight, "Next to the Blessed Sacrament itself, your neighbour is the holiest object presented to your senses."¹²

Two features of the way the ward is organized bear special mention. First, a Mormon doesn't choose which ward he or she will attend. Membership in a ward is determined by where one lives. This often leads to racially diverse congregations. (Sunday is *not* the most segregated day of the week in Mormonism.) Second, because there is no paid clergy, almost everyone in the ward has some responsibility. There is much sweat equity. That makes for amateurish contributions on occasion, but, more importantly, it creates a level of meaningful participation in a close-knit community of faith and service.

Notice what happens when these two characteristics work in tandem. Because Church members attend a ward based on where they live rather than their personal preferences, and because each member of the ward will most likely have some responsibility beyond simply attending Sunday services, Latter-day Saints invariably find themselves working side by side in church with people they may never have chosen to have lunch with. It is for this reason, as one careful observer noted, "Church involvement teaches

us compassion and patience as well as courage and discipline. It makes us responsible for the personal and marital, the physical and spiritual welfare of people we may not already love (may even heartily dislike), and thus we learn to love them. It stretches and challenges us, even when we are disappointed and exasperated, in ways we would not otherwise choose to be stretched and challenged. Thus it gives us a chance to be made better than we may have chosen to be—but need and ultimately want to be.”¹³

The first Sunday of each month, Mormons fast twenty-four hours and donate at least the amount of money that would have been spent on food to a fund that provides direct assistance to those in the ward who are struggling financially. And each adult member is asked to visit the home of a few other members each month to see what service can be provided. In short, we try to take care of each other. What is intended from all of this, of course, is that we will come to appreciate and even love those whose backgrounds, personalities, and interests are different from our own. That is the beginning of wisdom.

The Marriage Covenant. Some of the most sacred ordinances for Latter-day Saints are performed in the temple, a holy space that is set apart from the world. The model is the temple of the Hebrew Bible. In the LDS temple, covenants are made with Christ. The crowning covenant is the ordinance of marriage, “sealing” in Mormon parlance. The highest aspiration of a committed Latter-day Saint is to create a family that finds its strength in the sealing ordinance. Sealing is an interesting word to describe this ordinance. It evokes a sense of unity, love, and permanence. Unity is both the mark and the result of Christ’s Atonement, which works to make us “at one” with him and “at one” with others. Latter-day Saints believe the family is the primary place for learning how to achieve that type of unity.

Great emphasis is placed on preparing for marriage, which tends to happen at an earlier age among Mormons than among most Americans. For example, fifty-four percent of the graduating class this year at Brigham Young University were married. Mormon parents are likely to have more children than is typical of their neighbors. There is much devotional and recreational activity in Latter-day Saint families. For many, each day includes family prayer and scripture study. As mentioned, Sundays are filled with church meetings and activities. And each Monday evening the family gathers for family home evening—a devotional service in which religious principles are taught, games are played, songs are sung, prayers are offered, and chocolate is consumed in large quantities.

Mormon life is not intended to be confined to the family and the ward. They are but training grounds for Christian living in the larger world.

It was Joseph Smith's breathtaking ambition to seal together the entire human family. He taught that the hard work of the Church was to see that "the whole human family, back to Father Adam, be linked together in indissoluble bonds."¹⁴ I'll speak of two elements of this audacious enterprise. The first involves temples. I've already mentioned that families are sealed in temples. Even more distinctive is the ritual of performing the ordinances of salvation for those who have passed on—a biblical practice that gives expression to the Mormon belief that Christ's grace is extended to all humankind, even those who lived and died without hearing about his gospel. This practice of linking the past with the present through saving ordinances is a critical element of the Mormon project to join together all humankind.

Permit me a personal story that illustrates this facet of the Mormon experience. Several years ago, while awaiting our turn to perform baptisms in the Church's temple just outside Washington, D.C., my family watched as a group of black and Latino Latter-day Saints from the Bronx were baptized on behalf of Asians from the nineteenth century. In that setting, barriers of race, nationality, culture, geography, and time were transcended by a sense of unity, an achievement—if only momentary—of at-one-ment. At-one-ment through Christ is the idea that gives life to modern Mormonism.

But there is more. In keeping with Joseph Smith's declaration that "friendship is the grand fundamental purpose of Mormonism,"¹⁵ Latter-day Saints are urged to become actively involved in the larger world. While there was a season in our history when we retreated from civilization to the wilderness of the Great Basin in the western United States, since the middle of the twentieth century, Latter-day Saints have been moving into the mainstream of national life wherever we live. The Mormon diaspora away from the Intermountain West has brought with it an emphasis on living among others in a way that makes a positive contribution.

Although still little known to many (hence a talk such as this), Latter-day Saints in the United States, for example, have achieved disproportionate success in political life (Mitt Romney, Harry Reid, and Orrin Hatch are all Mormons) and even in popular culture. The Osmonds, Steve Youngs, and Danny Ainges have been joined by Ken Jennings of *Jeopardy* fame and successful contestants on *American Idol*. Indicative of the Mormon move into the larger society is our emphasis on education. A significant portion of the Church's revenues is spent in support of its educational system. Studies have shown that religious commitment among Mormons increases with their level of educational training.¹⁶ Brigham Young University is the Church's flagship school and, in addition to its success in athletics, has graduated

more students who go on to complete doctorates than all but nine other universities in the world.¹⁷

The best known of the Church's outreach efforts is its vigorous missionary program. It is the expectation that all able young men will spend two years living away from home proselytizing and serving in always spartan and sometimes primitive circumstances. Many young women and retired seniors serve as missionaries as well. There is a purpose to this effort beyond creating new members. The missionary experience has become a rite of passage in which the chief ethic is service to those outside the household of faith.

Less well known but of increasing importance in terms of resources spent and emphasis given is the Church's humanitarian service, which focuses on disaster relief as well as teaching principles of economic self-sufficiency in developing areas of the world. This effort, which is carried on by both the institutional Church and individual members in service of their own choosing, is a response to the scriptural imperative described by Joseph Smith: "A man filled with the love of God, is not content with blessing his family alone, but ranges through the whole world, anxious to bless the whole human race."¹⁸ "[His duty] is to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, to provide for the widow, to dry up the tear of the orphan, to comfort the afflicted, whether in this church, or in any other, or in no church at all, wherever he finds them."¹⁹

Mormonism is a work in progress. At its core is a belief in the literal fatherhood of God; the actual kinship of humankind; the centrality of Christ and the power of his Atonement to transform individuals, families, and communities; and the recognition that we live in a climactic moment in world history. Latter-day Saints haven't made a perfect run at what we believe we are called to do. Even a casual look at us will disclose that we are painfully fallible. But on careful examination, you will find a community that is vibrant, idealistic, adaptable, and committed to Christ and his purposes. I hope you will "come and see."

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School that is intended to be an introduction to the teachings and practices of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

1. C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (New York: Touchstone, 1996).
2. Ross Douthat, "The Implications of Christmas," *The Atlantic*, http://ross-douthat.theatlantic.com/archives/2008/12/the_implications_of_christmas.php (December 25, 2008), emphasis added.
3. See Hugh W. Nibley, "The Book of Mormon: A Minimal Statement," in *Nibley on the Timely and the Timeless* (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1978), 151.
4. Jeffrey R. Holland, *Christ and the New Covenant: The Messianic Message of the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1997), 7.
5. Oxford University Press has published a reliable account of the debate over the provenance of the Book of Mormon. See Terryl L. Givens, *By the Hand of Mormon: The American Scripture That Launched a New World Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 89–184. That Oxford has published a sympathetic account of the book's origins may invite the curious to actually study its text. As non-Mormon scholar Thomas O'Dea observed: "The *Book of Mormon* has not been universally considered by its critics as one of those books that must be read in order to have an opinion of it." Thomas O'Dea, *The Mormons* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1957), 26.
6. Terryl L. Givens, "'Lightning Out of Heaven': Joseph Smith and the Forging of Community," Forum Address, November 29, 2005, at Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, available at <http://speeches.byu.edu/reader/reader.php?id=10924>.
7. See Daniel C. Peterson, "Mormonism and the Trinity," *Element* 1 (Spring and Fall 2007): 14–22.
8. Paul E. Dahl, "Godhead," in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, ed. Daniel H. Ludlow, 4 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1992), 2:552.
9. The most famous formulations of this New Testament idea (see, for example, Romans 8:16, 17: "we are . . . heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ") come from St. Irenaeus of Lyons, who taught that "through his transcendent love, our Lord Jesus Christ became what we are, that he might make us to be what he is," and St. Athanasius of Alexandria, who taught that "[God] became man, that man might become god." See James R. Payton Jr., "Keeping the End in View: How the Strange Yet Familiar Doctrine of Theosis Can Invigorate the Christian Life," *Christianity Today* 52, no. 10 (October 2008): 67, available online at <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2008/october/36.66.html>.
10. The phrase, as applied to Latter-day Saints, came to my attention in comments Dr. Richard Land made about how some view the Mormon faith. See Jason Szep, "In U.S., Mormons Are in the Spotlight," *Reuters*, June 10, 2007 (quoting Dr. Land), available online at <http://www.reuters.com/article/lifestyleMolt/idUSN0527023320070610>.
11. Paul Pollei, founder and artistic director of the Gina Bachauer Foundation, as quoted by Edward Reichel, "Return of the Bachauer," *Deseret News*, June 1, 2004, <http://www.deseretnews.com/article/1,5143,595069560,00.html>.
12. C. S. Lewis, "The Weight of Glory," in *The Weight of Glory and Other Addresses* (New York: Touchstone, 1996), 40.

13. The ideas in this paragraph come from Eugene England, *Why the Church Is as True as the Gospel* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1986), 4–11; the quotation is found on page 5.

14. George Q. Cannon, *The Life of Joseph Smith the Prophet* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1986), 516. B. H. Roberts described Smith's vision this way: "[The Church's] mission is to link family with family, and generation with generation, until all the chains are complete which shall bind the whole race of men and women in bands of love and salvation to our Father and our God, through Jesus Christ our Lord." B. H. Roberts, "Religious Faiths: The Claims, Doctrines, and Organization of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints," *Improvement Era* 1, no. 11 (September 1898): 835.

15. Joseph Smith, sermon of July 23, 1843 (Sunday afternoon), in Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook, eds., *The Words of Joseph Smith: The Contemporary Accounts of the Nauvoo Discourses of the Prophet Joseph* (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1980), 234.

16. Stan L. Albrecht, "The Consequential Dimension of Mormon Religiosity," *BYU Studies* 29, no. 2 (1989): 95–105.

17. See Brigham Young University: 2009 Academic Rankings, <http://yfacts.byu.edu/viewarticle.aspx?id=273>.

18. Joseph Smith Jr., *History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 2d ed., rev., 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1971), 4:227.

19. *Times and Seasons* 3, no. 10 (March 15, 1842): 732.

Christ the Mariner

The marina lies heavy with keels;
Lines sway with an impression of breeze;
The lifting air—and the matte sail claps
Convex, concave to receive the shadow
Of clouds as dim as utter night.

What comes down the shaft of midnight
But Arcturus vying with the proximate sun?

Ancient star, you are pure as silvering
Beam as your light shivers in the western
Air.

Immediacy encumbers me like willows
Before the sea, where the milfoil galaxies
Shimmer across its surface as retortion
For sin as I say,
Resurrection,
The world's dying is the shiver of eternal spring.

—Clinton F. Larson

A Local Faith

Nathan B. Oman

On October 22, 1844, men and women across America were disappointed when the world did not come to an end. They were the followers of a lay Baptist preacher named William Miller. Beginning in 1833, Miller, a native of New York's Burned-over District, began producing elaborate biblical commentaries indicating that Christ's Second Coming was imminent. Working with these writings, his followers converged on October 22 as the day of the Savior's coming, much to their ultimate disappointment.

Mormonism might easily have suffered a similar fate. Indeed, in 1843, as excitement over Miller's predictions was reaching its height, Joseph Smith told of a revelation informing him that he would see the Lord face to face if he lived to be eighty-five years old. "I was left thus," he said, "without being able to decide whether this coming referred to the beginning of the millennium or to some previous appearing, or whether I should die and thus see his face" (D&C 130:16). This coy prophecy, however, was an outlier. In contrast to the Millerites, the promised Millennium of Mormonism was less a moment than a place—Zion, the New Jerusalem—to be built up to the Lord by the gathering of the faithful. Mormonism thus made connection to a particular location a central element of religious experience. Zion, however, consisted of more than merely the transposition of apocalyptic expectations from time to space. It was a concrete community with neighbors, social halls, neatly laid-out lots, and due allowance for grazing livestock. At its worst, this concept of Zion reduced religion to the mere hum of work and business. At its best, Zion sanctified the ordinary, turning one's home and town into the beachhead of eternity.

The Mormons had their own disappointed expectations. Those disappointments, however, were geographic rather than chronological. The

constant need to alter and reinterpret the geography of Zion—as the Saints lost in succession promised lands in Ohio, Missouri, and Illinois—left its mark on Mormon doctrine. Even the ultimate resting place in Deseret proved chancy. In 1857, as Johnston’s Army marched west to crush the Mormon rebellion, Brigham Young made contingency plans to abandon Utah and move the Saints en masse to the north. The move proved unnecessary, but it took a while for Salt Lake City to become Zion. In the end, however, the force of time and population gave Deseret a theological heft in its own right, and Isaiah’s prophecy of the mountain of the Lord’s house in the tops of the mountains (Isa. 2:2) was appropriated for the spires of the Salt Lake Temple.

I grew up in the place created by this transposition of the Millennium from time to space. My earliest memories are of the house where I lived as a small child. It was a modest home, built around 1900 in what was then a residential suburb of Salt Lake City. The house stands on Sixth East, between Eighth and Ninth South, the streets measuring themselves from the Salt Lake Temple. During the nineteenth century, this bit of the valley was known as Mill Farm and belonged to Brigham Young. Today, Brigham’s farm is a park, and my sister and I played on a swing set in what had been the prophet’s backyard. As a child, however, I measured the



The house on Sixth East in Salt Lake City where I lived as a child. All photographs courtesy Pam Oman.



The Chase Mansion in Liberty Park, which was once Brigham Young's home.



The Sixth East entrance to Liberty Park, which was formerly Brigham Young's farm.



This small gazebo marks the location of the only tree growing on the plain during the time the Pioneers entered the Salt Lake Valley in 1847.

religious content of my place not from the temple or Brigham's farm, but from a small gazebo set in the middle of the road several blocks north of our house. The Mormons designed their Zion with wide streets, wide enough to completely turn a wagon and team without unhitching them. It made for roads rather too large for modern residential neighborhoods, with the result that down the middle of the streets ran broad, grassy medians. The gazebo sat on one of these medians surrounded by a modest garden. A small bronze plaque declared that when the Mormon pioneers entered the valley in July 1847, the only tree growing on the plain before them stood on this spot.

My earliest sense of the sacred emanated from that gazebo. Riding my bike down the tree-lined streets of Salt Lake City, I knew that this wooded world of roads and houses had once been a barren expanse of sagebrush. Driving through the desolate valleys north of Salt Lake City each summer on the way to my grandpar-

ents' home in southern Idaho, I could imagine the landscape before the Mormons arrived. It had been transformed, I was taught, by pioneer-dug irrigation ditches. (My cousins in Utah Valley, fifty miles to the south, still had an irrigation ditch running in front of their house; I was deeply envious.) The green around me had been the pioneers' dream, a desert blossoming as a rose, according to prophecy (Isa. 35:1).

In the chapel where we attended church each Sunday was a vast stained-glass window portraying Joseph Smith's First Vision. My father still has the drawing of it that I produced during one of the long, boring meetings filled with unremembered sermons. At the window's center, Joseph kneels before two hovering figures in white. One gestures toward the other. Green glass depicting the leaves of the Sacred Grove surrounds them. In my mind, the glowing leaves in the window merged with the sacred greenery of Salt Lake City. Just as the presence of God sanctified the leaves surrounding Joseph, stories of barren valleys, pioneers, and the arboreal redemption they wrought sanctified the trees of my childhood.



The Salt Lake Second Ward Chapel where I attended church as a small child.



My drawing of the stained-glass window in the Second Ward Chapel.

I lived in God's city, not a place as sacred as that where Joseph had his theophany but a place nevertheless touched by God's cosmic plan. When I received my first Bible, I turned to the passages in Isaiah on the mountain of the Lord's house and the blossoming rose of the desert and marked them with a red pencil.

At eight years old, I was baptized. Our chapel did not have a baptismal font. Rather, we made our way six blocks west and eight blocks north to Temple Square. I recall standing before a bronze statue of handcart pioneers. To me, their struggle across the continent seemed the epitome of righteous heroism. My father informed me that my own ancestors had pulled just such handcarts to Zion in the mid-nineteenth century. Next to the statue stood Brigham Young's great Tabernacle. My father pointed to its domed roof and explained how the lattice of rafters was held together by rawhide lashings and what a marvel the building had been when it first rose in the 1860s. Had the pioneers who lashed together the Tabernacle pulled handcarts as well? They must have, I thought. The building took on their heroism, the heroism of God's chosen Saints doing his will amid a persecuting world. In the basement of the building was a font, and it was there that I went into the waters of baptism and became a Latter-day Saint.

By then Mormonism had long since given up on the geographic gathering to an Intermountain Zion. Indeed, in my childhood during



Bronze statue of handcart pioneers on Temple Square.

the 1980s, the excitement that my father carried home from Church headquarters, where he worked, was the excitement of a globalizing religion. The glory of Zion was no longer in wagon trains heading west for Utah but in Mormon congregations growing in Latin America, West Africa, and the Philippines. Yet for me, even this global story was tied to the older theology of place. The prophets went forth from Salt Lake City, where the streets were still measured from the temple. Satellites beamed their teachings every six months from the conferences held in the Tabernacle where I was baptized. Even in a global church, my faith was local, tied to the place where I was born.

Eventually I discovered that the town I grew up in is not the center of the world. When I got older, I left Salt Lake City. I lived in other cities that aspired to be the *axis mundi*: Boston, which Oliver Wendell Holmes declared in his famous “Autocrat of the Breakfast Table” essays to be the hub of the solar system, and Washington, D.C., which in the age of the *Pax Americana* is a city with an honest claim to be the capital of the world. The Salt Lake City of my childhood shrank in size, and as I turned down Pennsylvania Avenue toward the White House or up Massachusetts Avenue toward Harvard Square, I recognized that my hometown could look provincial and unschooled.

With a growing awareness of the vastness of the world beyond Salt Lake City, I realized that my local faith created three temptations. First was the temptation of embracing the cosmic story of my hometown too tightly. The vices of giving in to such a temptation are easy to see and imagine. If Salt Lake City is the *axis mundi*, the point at which God speaks to prophets for mankind, then perhaps Salt Lake City is the destiny of the world. Much as I love the city, it is not an entirely inspiring vision. For example, if I were to embrace such a view, the two years I spent teaching the message of the Restoration in the cities and towns of Kyoung Sang Do province would become a quixotic attempt to transform Koreans into



The west end of Brigham Young's great Tabernacle. In the basement at this end was the baptismal font where I was baptized.

suburban Utah Mormons. My mission would be reduced to a project partaking of both a hubristic imperialism and a comic parochialism. Likewise, my local faith could easily become smug, ignorantly content in its own self-importance. My locality would be the hub of the solar system without Holmes's redeeming irony. The result would be a narrow and sterile life that suffers all the more from not knowing that it is narrow and sterile.

The second temptation was to embrace the cosmopolitan world of Boston and Washington, D.C. From this perch, Utah could be dismissed as a colorful backwater, perhaps an interesting place to be from but one that needn't make strong spiritual claims. My local faith could be transformed into a kind of nostalgia. The vocabulary for such a self-understanding lay ready-made. Mormonism could become my "heritage" or my "tradition," a marker of identity in a modern world that understands such markers to be secondary to the more universal claims of democracy, meritocracy, and pop culture. I could transform Mormonism into a repository from which to selectively take materials for my self-authored identity. It would no longer claim me. Rather, I would appropriate the colorful or fashionable bits of it to create a persona, one tied to the Mormon stories of place but only as a literary conceit. I could become like the law school classmate who waxed eloquent on the virtues of his picturesque Mormon childhood while sipping coffee and other forbidden gentile beverages with aspiring citizens of the cosmopolis. For all its occasional hypocrisy, the cosmopolitan world is a tolerant place and likes nothing better than a bit of local color, provided that the local remains firmly subjugated to the cosmopolitan. The leaves of my childhood, however, were not simply colorful. They were sacred.

In a sense, the scandal of my local faith, of a spirituality reared in Salt Lake City as the center of the world, is simply the hometown version of a common scandal. How can that which is local make claims that are universal? Jesus was an itinerant Jewish preacher in a provincial backwater who claimed to be the son of God, the Word made flesh in Nazareth, of all places. The paradox, it would seem, is that all life, including religious life, is local, endowed with a set of particularities arising from history, place, and tradition. It is these particularities to which we are necessarily attached. Inevitably we live in a particular place, a particular time, and a particular history. The appeal of the religious particularities of my childhood, however, lay precisely in the hope that they offered something beyond themselves. The trees and streets and tabernacles and temples formed a chain leading from my bicycle on the sidewalks of Sixth East back through time and space and myth and revelation to God.

It is here that I faced a third temptation. It was the temptation to abandon the particularities and reach only for that which is beyond them. It was the temptation to give up—out of embarrassment at its locatedness—a faith that is somewhere and reach instead for an unlocated faith that is nowhere in particular. A universal faith shorn of particularities offers the hope of being unencumbered by the local. It is an attractive vision, one in which I might enjoy the spiritual riches of the Restoration without its scandalous details. In short, perhaps I can avoid the burden of a sacred story enmeshed in the parochial streets of Salt Lake City.

My Mormonism, however, teaches me that there is a kind of nihilism in the universal. The point shows up most powerfully in the Mormon concept of God. For example, Orson Pratt, one of our great nineteenth-century thinkers and polemicists, attacked the traditional vision of a God without body, parts, or passions. He wrote: “There are two classes of Atheists in the world. One class denies the existence of God in the most positive language: the other denies his existence in duration or space. One says, ‘There is no God;’ the other says, ‘God is not *here* or *there*, any more than he exists *now* and *then*.’ . . . The infidel says, God does not exist anywhere. The Immaterialist says, ‘He exists *Nowhere*.’”¹ According to Pratt, Mormonism’s response to both forms of atheism was to assert the existence of a radically embodied and situated God. “The Father has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as a man’s” (D&C 130:22) taught Joseph Smith. It is a doctrine that is not without its own scandals, but it offers the hope of a God that can be approached without an annihilation of the defining particularities of history, space, and body. Indeed, it is striking that Pratt associates atheism with a God shorn of place—“The Immaterialist says, ‘He exists *Nowhere*.’” Even faith needs to be situated someplace.

In the end, it is very difficult to live nowhere in particular, despite the embarrassments of a local faith. Repudiating Salt Lake City would mean giving up a world of sacredness that was given by the landscape of my birth and reaching for a sacredness that was not given to me, one that would have to be self-authored. The problem of a self-authored faith, however, is that ultimately I would confront only myself. Given the human tendency toward self-deception, this would be no mean feat. There is a dignity in self-discovery through a self-created spirituality, but such is not a spirituality in which one sees the face of God amid irrigation ditches and trees planted on the floor of a dusty, sagebrush-covered valley.

I no longer live in Salt Lake City. It has been more than a decade and a half since I left. I now live in the tidewater of eastern Virginia. From time to time, I feel the stab of exile. The James River will transform itself into the waters of Babylon, and I will pledge the cunning of my right

hand (Ps. 137:5) not to forget the mountain of the Lord in the tops of the mountains and the gazebo with the plaque remembering the only tree in the valley. I find, however, that even in a landscape dominated by stories of revolution and civil war, my Mormonism can become local. I discover that during the 1840s, Tazwell County, Virginia, had a thriving cluster of Mormon branches dubbed Little Nauvoo. I ferret out stories of nineteenth-century Latter-day Saints passing through Norfolk on their way from Europe to Zion. I savor the inscription of Mormon scriptures on the stone exteriors of Virginia and Washington, D.C., chapels built in the 1930s and 1940s as part of Mormonism's permanent return to the East Coast. I learn of the great wave of Mormons brought to the tidewater by war and the U.S. Navy in the 1940s and the birth of our wards and stakes. Even in Virginia, Mormonism can leave its traces on my landscape. My hunger for these details strikes many of my fellow Latter-day Saints as odd, a strange bit of religious pedantry. With them, however, I remain within the sacred world that was given me as a little boy on Sixth East, and I can plant trees in the spot of ground where God continues to gather me.

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1. Orson Pratt, *The Essential Orson Pratt*, ed. David J. Whittaker (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1991), 77.

Would That All God's Children Were Poets

Casualene Meyer

As *BYU Studies* poetry editor, I have been asked to describe how I and the other judges choose poems for prizes and publication. Strong poems are more than snapshots and certainly more than security camera footage; they cannot merely recount great stories, pieces of advice, or beautiful scenes. Insightful and elegant poems combine a view with a vision and pay attention to the crafting of words, their sounds and meanings. Beyond this, poems published in *BYU Studies* should show awareness that, while they are written to Mormon readers who desire to be faithful, these poems should be universally accessible and appealing, regardless of the reader's background. All great poetry can give nourishment and pleasure to its readers whether or not they understand entirely or agree completely with the worldview and allusions of the writer.

Since *BYU Studies* welcomes and receives overtly religious poetry, I can sense that hurt and confusion might result if poets are not published and therefore feel that both their talent and their faith have been rejected. Sometimes poets feel that poems are like testimonies—personal expressions of truths as the poet understands them—that should receive publication at an open microphone simply by virtue of the bearer being moved upon by the Spirit. I could reply that, in reality, even the content and intent of testimony bearing has been the subject of inspired critique by Elder Dallin H. Oaks (quoting President Spencer W. Kimball)¹ and Elder David A. Bednar.² It is safe to say that both content and craft must be strong, and that writing about the most sublime experiences and impressions in an appropriate, strong way is hard work. My favorite perspective on the subject comes from American poet John Ciardi:

I had a lovely exchange at the *Saturday Review* with, I guess, a sweet lady. I had rejected some of her poems. I have to reject a lot of them. I get about 500 a week, and I can only accept two. But she took my rejection personally, as many people do, and wrote me a hot letter. I had not remembered the poem, but she said, "I suppose you rejected my poem because it was about God." I had to reply. "Dear Madam: No, I did not reject your poem because it was about God. I rejected it because I could not conquer a feeling that you were not equal to your subject."³

As writers, none of us are really equal to our subject when the subject is God (or his children or creations, for that matter); nevertheless, like the noble and great Abraham, each of us can say, "I have taken upon me to speak [of] the Lord, which am but dust and ashes" (to paraphrase Genesis 18:27).

Professionals, PhDs, and Panelists

Once I have chosen the poems I feel are aesthetically strong and appropriate for *BYU Studies* (even as I recognize that these are not all of equal weight), I pass them on to the judges for rating and combine their opinions to rank the poems. Each year I choose a different panel of judges. In 2010, the judges included two men and one woman, all of them academics (*BYU Studies* is, after all, an academic journal and BYU a dedicated academic school as well as a nice place to meet people), and all of them literary minded.

I think all our poets would enjoy sitting down and visiting informally with the panelists and would enjoy associating with them as I have, so I will introduce you to the judges in their own words and share with you their criteria for good poetry.

Justin Blessinger. Dr. Blessinger is an Associate Professor of English and an award-winning creative writer. He was raised on the Fort Peck Sioux and Assiniboiné reservation in northeast Montana, where many of his stories are set. Recently, his work has appeared in *The Bear Deluxe* magazine and *South Dakota Review*. He lives in Madison, South Dakota, with his wife, Christina, and their two daughters.

Of poetry, Blessinger says: "I respond to poetry that makes me see an event or artifact again, for the first time. Details that surprise but do not thwart the mind's eye assist in this. Poetry should convey something, if not universal, certainly important. The best poetry translates the familiar into the alien and back again, giving me a gift to take back into the quotidian spans of life, to transform my experience of the mundane into the momentous, even, at times, divine."

Sirje Kiin. Dr. Kiin describes herself briefly in terms of her literary achievements: "I have published seven books in Estonian and in Finnish.

I am an Estonian writer and literary scientist, with a PhD in comparative literature. I have written biographies, poetry, essays, political history books, reviews, and literary science articles (see www.sirjekiin.net). Also, I have translated ten books from Finnish and Russian into Estonian."

Kiin expresses her idea of strong poetry in these words: "Good poetry needs for me verbal freshness, poetical images, unusual associations, and strong rhythm, but sometimes it is enough to just have peaceful description of small moments of everyday life, like one Estonian poet wrote once in 'March' (in raw translation):

my fingers are not freezing anymore
when I choose a phone number
in a street phone box.

Now, when nobody even remembers those phone boxes, this little poem tells even more."

Jack Walters. Dr. Walters introduces himself as a writer and a business professor: "I came late to academe, leaving the private sector at thirty-five

BYU Studies Poetry Contest First-Prize Winners

2010	David J. Passey, "City Dog"
2009	Norma S. Bowkett, "Clocks Have Not Stopped"
2008	Christopher C. Lund, "Tunica Doloris"
2007	MaryJan Gay Munger, "After Sorrow"
2006	Michael Hicks, "Day Seven"
2004	Richard Tice, "As Fire"
2003	Michael Hicks, "Museum of Ancient Life"
2002	Donnell Hunter, "Chilean Spring"
2001	Michael Hicks, "Deluge"
2000	Ellen Gregory, "A Riddle for Didymus"
1999	Ken Haubrock, "Three Women in Church"
1998	James Richards, "Adam's Song"
1996	Michael Hicks, "Altarpiece"
1995	Jennie Rae Leishman, "This Woman Is Full"

To read these poems, go to byustudies.byu.edu.

to return to school to complete my master's and doctoral degrees. I worked as an academic administrator for ten years but did not really enjoy it or believe that it was my calling. When I shifted to full-time faculty work here [at Dakota State University], enjoyment of my work and life in general went up a lot. I recently completed writing a book about positive management, a new subfield in my discipline. The book is research based but has substantial creative content, in that it is essentially a persuasive essay about how organizations could perform better if the tenets of positive management were more widely implemented. It will be published and made available in summer 2010. At some point in the future, I may again write one of these 'airplane books,' as they are called, because executives buy them to read on plane trips, but my true goal is fiction writing. Nothing outside of family relationships gives me such happiness and satisfaction."

Of good poetry, Walters says: "I look for three things in reading poetry. Most important, it must draw pictures in my mind. If they can be living and moving pictures, it is even better, but I can be satisfied with still images, too. Second, I look for broad understandability to readers. The more people that can relate to the story being told, however far it may be from their personal experience, the higher I evaluate a poem. Finally, I have a personal preference for free over rhymed verse because I find rhymed verse to be too confining. While it may be true that the greatest poets can achieve goals one and two while rhyming, most people are not 'greatest poets', so removing the rhyming limitation widens the sweep of storytelling and makes the story seem more real."

In summary, our judges are, to modify a definition from William Wordsworth's preface to *Lyrical Ballads*, human beings reading as human beings,⁴ but with an aesthetic edge born of making literary appreciation a profession or avocation.

Promising Poems

Each year *BYU Studies* sponsors a poetry contest. The winners are published, and prizes are given. The deadline for submission is December 31. Last year's contest drew an abundance of entries rich in variety, faith, and earnestness. As poetry editor, I would do well to assume that all poetry I receive is a valiant effort in verse, so how, given so much desire on the part of the poets, could I choose a "winner," especially if poetry is a matter of the heart and of preference, and it would be quite heartless and preferential to say some poems are worthy and others are not? The reality is that sincerity of heart does not equal quality of art, and sometimes bad poetry happens to good people.

If one draws a parallel between poems and “spirits,” a verse from the Book of Abraham helps illustrate in some degree why all poetry exists in a hierarchy, and that some can and even should be deemed noble and great, or prize-worthy: “And the Lord said unto me: These two facts do exist, that there are two spirits, one being more intelligent than the other; there shall be another more intelligent than they; I am the Lord thy God, I am more intelligent than they all” (Abraham 3:19).

The task, then, of the poetry editor for *BYU Studies* is to try to discern among all the poems received which are the stronger, and even the strongest, and recommend them for prizes and publication. All poetry is not created equal, so it is not just a matter of granting open admission to a poetry pantheon for any verse that exists; some poetry should be not only appreciated but actually admired, and like the criterion that “he that is greatest among you shall be your servant” (Matthew 23:11), the best poetry serves readers with the greatest substance and purity. Good poems may touch us, and earnest readers, like the woman who touched the border of Christ’s garment, instinctively seek them out and touch *them*. In turn, the good poems give us a portion of their power and virtue, leaving us healed.

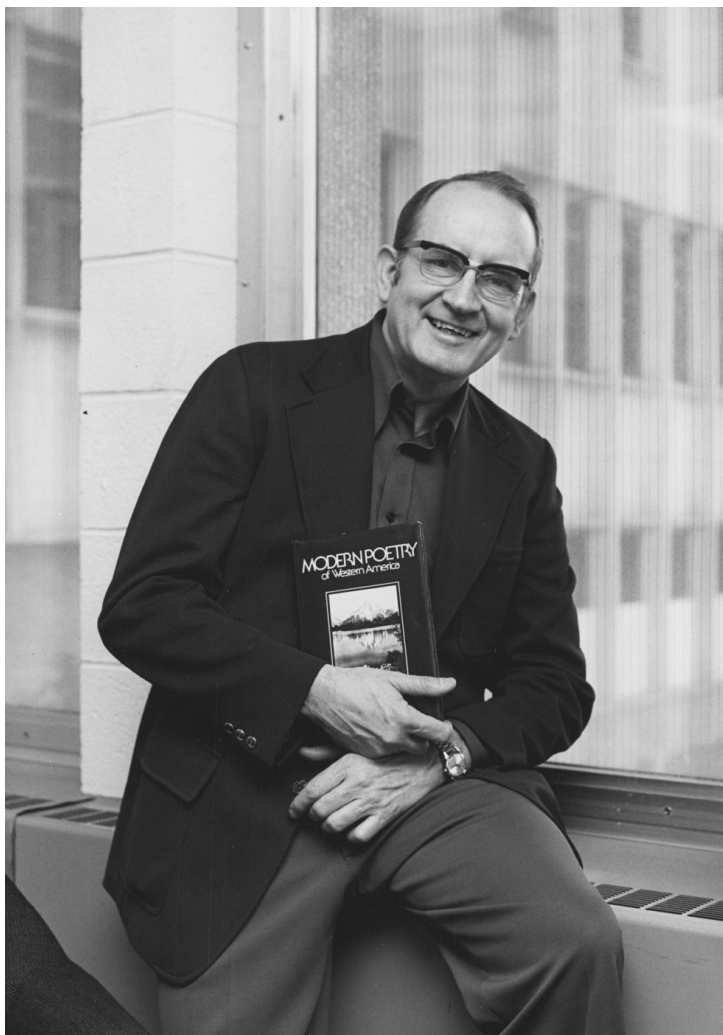
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1. Dallin H. Oaks, “Testimony,” *Ensign* 38 (May 2008): 26, citing Spencer W. Kimball, *The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, ed. Edward L. Kimball (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1982), 138.

2. David A. Bednar, “More Diligent and Concerned at Home,” *Ensign* 39 (November 2009): 18.

3. John Ciardi, “How Does a Poem Mean?” *New Era* 17 (August 1987): 44.

4. “Definition,” in William Wordsworth, “Preface,” *Lyrical Ballads* (1800).



Clinton F. Larson. Courtesy University Archives, Brigham Young University.

Clinton F. Larson

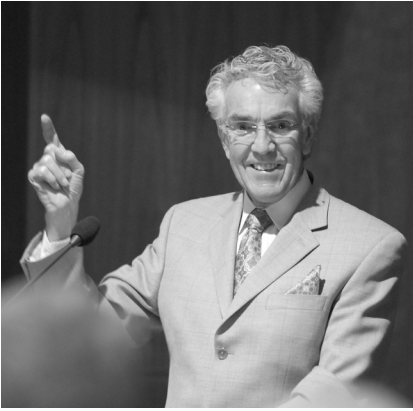
“I Miss His Booming Laugh”

Neal E. Lambert

On the evening of March 10, 2010, as a prelude to a symposium sponsored by BYU Studies to celebrate its fiftieth anniversary, a special lecture was held in the Harold B. Lee Library Auditorium to honor Clinton F. Larson, founding editor of BYU Studies, and Hugh W. Nibley, frequent contributor to the journal. This event also introduced two new exhibits created by the L. Tom Perry Special Collections staff to honor the work of Larson and Nibley. The following remarks by Neal E. Lambert, one of Clinton Larson’s colleagues, were delivered at this special lecture.

First, you need to know that I am here tonight representing—certainly not replacing—Richard Cracroft, who, because of ill health, cannot be here himself. He has asked me to extend his sincere apologies for missing this assignment, “a job that I was looking forward to doing.” Dick’s witty voice would have been wonderfully appropriate here tonight, especially since he and Clinton have each had such significant roles in the establishment and recognition of Mormon literary expression. I regret, as well, that the circle of those who heard and knew firsthand the voice and personality of Clinton Larson is now rapidly shrinking. Seeing and hearing Clinton, the man, was an unforgettable experience.

Clinton was a presence. His tall, self-assured figure filled the space around him as no one else I have known. His tieless unbuttoned collar, his beltless trousers with suspenders were visible types of Clinton’s rejection of restraint, adjuring any constriction to his free-flowing blood and spirit. Even his office had its unique atmosphere with its plush rug and floor lamp, as though Clinton eschewed our usual asphalt tile and our fluorescent ceilings.



Neal Lambert, during his remarks, demonstrating how Clinton Larson would raise his right forefinger in triumph.

But it was his voice that I remember best—his roaring laughter, heard most often in the pleasure of successful wordplay, but sometimes, as well, in derision of something that he disapproved. In my memory's ear, I still hear his unmistakable voice from the department steno-pool where, standing over the pedes-taled, multitudinous pages of the Oxford English Dictionary, his left forefinger pointing to the fifth (or the fifteenth) definition of some unfamiliar, latinate, polysyllabic word, his right forefinger raised in triumph, he would boom

out, "Aha! See! There it is! That is exactly what I meant," his forceful voice a response to some poor colleague's or critic's questioning of a certain word from one of his poems.

Clinton lived in an atmosphere of words. Indeed, he seemed most alive when, as he was wont, he unabashedly, without knock, inquiry, or introduction, would walk into one's office, fresh manuscript in hand to read in the sonorous sounds of his operatic baritone some lines from his latest composition. Clinton was, above all else, a practicing poet. And his practice was his passion.

Fortunately, his own talent was nurtured early on through his exposure as a missionary to the articulate and word-conscious Hugh B. Brown. That talent was further cultivated, refined, and directed under the influence of Brewster Ghiselin at the University of Utah. Through the years, other regional, national, and international poets recognized and utilized his work and his abilities. With William Stafford, he edited *Modern Poetry of Western America*, and with Andre Maurois, *La Poesie Contemporaine aux Etats-Unis*. He was instrumental in founding the Rocky Mountain Writers' Convention and the National Federation of State Poetry Societies, and he was the first to fill the position of BYU's poet in residence. This list simply skips a stone across the surface of his accomplishments.

Clinton was also, as we recognize in a special way here tonight, one of the founding forces and the first editor of *BYU Studies*. What we see in this journal now is the fruit of an effort launched five decades ago through the indefatigable efforts of Clinton Larson. And we can thank him for that.

His legacy is present in the anniversary we celebrate and recognize, tonight and in the days ahead. Indeed, Clinton was a pioneer, making possible much of what has come after him.

However, after all he has done, the poetry will be, at least for me, his most remembered legacy. As David Evans, one of Clinton's editors, said, Clinton is "one of the most significant" and highly respected writers of our time, and also one of the most prolific.¹ Eugene England called Clinton Larson "the spiritual father of [modern] Mormon literature,"² who showed us that writing by and about Latter-day Saints needs no apology.

So, how splendid it is to have now collected here both his published and his unpublished works, which now are available for consideration and study. The Clinton Larson collection that we recognize here tonight is a rich gathering, especially in its holographs, through which we can trace and explore the creative process itself, following Clinton's own aesthetic track—and his eclectic mind and heart and hand—as he made his way through words in the cause of Zion. So, in the end, we will remember Clinton as an extraordinary pioneer for Mormon literature at large.

But even beyond his place in the history of Mormon literary development, I believe we can as well remember him as an example of an artist working in his own atmosphere of faith. Clinton showed us how to draw significant expression from the deep well of our own belief. He showed us that the true poet writes well not in spite of his faith, but because of it. Indeed, as Richard Cracroft and I were working to establish our own serious consideration of the literature of Mormonism, we were floundering about, looking for a title for our collection. And it was Clinton who helped us understand what was at the heart of our gatherings. He was the one who helped us see the true center of what we had before us and gave us the title *A Believing People: Literature of the Latter-day Saints*.

That belief is present, implicit and explicit, in everything Clinton did. He articulated the grand qualities in the mundane efforts and quiet decisions of the Mormon migration as well as anyone I know, as demonstrated in this dialogue from "Mantle of the Prophet," giving voice to people living out a God-given history. Stephen Forbes and Nancy Dayton, two young Mormon lovers, ponder the future of leaving Nauvoo and going west, sound and sense combining in an expression of faith that takes on an almost epic quality. Stephen says to Nancy:

I have become Brigham's man.
 When he spoke of Joseph I saw
 A scimitar of cities against the mountains
 Where we must go, and somehow in him
 I saw Joseph again, the arm of Joseph
 That will bring us there:

Nancy, a scimitar of cities against the blue mountains,
 And a great city where the temple of the six spires
 Awakens the dawn of our people: . . .
 The temple of Joseph is there and golden Moroni
 In the flame of morning bursting from the eastern peaks;
 The singing morning is there and blue-clear night
 When the valley glows and the air is warm
 As the smile of Joseph: the meridian, north,
 And the temples rise in the gleaming scimitar.
 Come west, Nancy, our home is west;
 For that, we could leave Nauvoo;
 For the cities, we could walk a hundred years
 Beside the axletree and wagon wheel;
 We could forget the old lands behind us
 For the hundred years of prophecy in Brigham Young.³

For Clinton, religion—his faith—was not a source for metaphors by which to understand and explain his life, but rather his life was a metaphor by which he could understand and articulate his faith, his religion. Thus, Clinton's poetic vision saw the love and grace of God in the matters of everyday living.

Let me illustrate this point in two of his simplest and most accessible pieces. The first comes from a simple breakfast episode of spilt cereal, touching our human need for Fatherly understanding:

Granddaughter

Next to tears for the supposed naughtiness
 Of tipping oatmeal from her pastel bowl
 And spilling milk under our haughtiness,
 She displays the repentance of her soul

 Over there. Her gaze is tenuous with sorrow
 As she looks at the world, hoping for the best,
 Arms folded to gather herself for the harrow
 Of scolding. "Amen," she says in a tentative test

 Of our love, grace over, but willing to pray.
 I saw the lip of her tray had tipped her bowl,
 She not knowing why her oatmeal in disarray
 Was so, but feeling the sackcloth of her role.

 And there stand I as well with her as anywhere,
 Marvelling how to keep some order at hand,
 Displaying my hope glossily to keep fair
 Days of charity flowing like hourglass sand.⁴

This next poem draws on a typical Sabbath scene—one of the older sisters of the ward nodding off to sleep under the stern doctrines of a speaker

(probably from the high council). But it's a picture, not of irony nor humor, but of beauty and of God's own peace:

Sleeping in Church

Lovely, Lovely. She brought her rickety bones
 And her belief to church, and now she sleeps.
 Hardly in the arms of Morpheus, who weeps
 In envy of her peace, she nods as she atones
 For every ill she thought of, amid the knowns
 And unknowns of this life. A low moan seeps
 From chief authority that she abridges and defeats
 His charismatic rule, though he busily hones
 The edge of Calvinism, grim and erstwhile,
 Mulling doctrine. But Sunday is a day
 Of rest, as she knows it. Who would defile
 Such peace? Not I. The church is hers, a way
 To house the inner light and the inner sight
 Of God it proffers, not the whittling spite
 Against her Christian will. Oh, lovely, lovely she,
 Aging at eighty-five in the arms of her creator!⁵

Certainly, the last word regarding Clinton Larson's poetry has not been written. We can be grateful that this collection will make possible a better understanding and a fuller appreciation of what this extraordinary person and pioneer has done. I think it appropriate to conclude with Richard Cracroft's own assessment of his friend. He said to me, as he regretfully handed this assignment off, "I love Clinton. He was a wonderful colleague, good-humored friend, remarkable poet; his contribution to Mormon letters is considerable, influential, and ongoing. I miss his booming laugh." So do we all.

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1. David L. Evans, ed., *Selected Poems of Clinton F. Larson* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1988), xi.

2. Eugene England, "Mormon Literature: Progress and Prospects," in *Mormon Americana: A Guide to Sources and Collections in the United States*, ed. David J. Whittaker (Provo, Utah: BYU Studies, 1995), 471.

3. Clinton F. Larson, "The Mantle of the Prophet: A Poetry Drama," *BYU Studies* 2, no. 2 (1960): 193–226.

4. Evans, *Selected Poems*, 5.

5. Evans, *Selected Poems*, 4.

John M. Lundquist.
The Temple of Jerusalem: Past, Present, and Future.
 Westport, Conn: Praeger Publishing, 2008

Reviewed by Jared W. Ludlow

John M. Lundquist is the Susan and Douglas Dillon Chief Librarian of the Asian and Middle Eastern Division of the Humanities and Social Sciences Library within the New York Public Library. He has written many books and articles on diverse subjects for both general and Latter-day Saint audiences. The title of this book—*The Temple of Jerusalem: Past, Present, and Future*—captures well the scope of Lundquist’s work. He addresses the role of the Jerusalem temple in ancient Israelite society, its role in the contemporary world, and the prophecies and apocalyptic notions about its future. The book mostly focuses on the ancient temple and its different phases, as well as its meaning to Western religious communities—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—covering six of the eight chapters. In addition to these chapters, one chapter discusses the meaning of the temple in our day, and one looks at the influence of the future temple on Jewish, Christian, and Islamic apocalyptic ideas.

The book incorporates complex archaeological, architectural, and typological discussions of the Jerusalem temple in comparison with other ancient Near Eastern temples, vocabulary, mythologies, rituals, and cosmologies. Since there are no “architectural or decorative or archaeological remains from this Temple known to have survived to the present time” (xvi), Lundquist relies heavily on textual accounts from “scriptural and historical records, as well as eyewitness accounts from ancient times” (xvi–xvii). He also looks at the archaeological excavations from the Syro-Palestinian cultural area to learn more about the Jerusalem temple through comparison with other temples of the same period.

There is a persistent view among the ancients, highlighted by Lundquist, that an earthly temple is in the image of a heavenly temple and

often marks the site of creation. As such, its location is immovable and its sanctity must be maintained. The earthly temple is usually divided into three distinct architectural units: the porch or vestibule (*'ulam*), the cella or nave (*heikal*), and the inner sanctuary or Holy of Holies (*debir*). The innermost sanctuary is “heaven on earth,” the “throne of God” on earth (17, 19). An interesting point the author returns to often is the possibility that the *debir* maintained its tentlike quality from the earlier Tabernacle because it was made (or lined) with cedar wood and was perhaps initially divided by wooden doors (and later by a tapestry veil). In other words, the ten-meter cube was treated as a separate unit and placed within the stone structure of Solomon's Temple. Within the *debir*, of course, was the Ark of the Covenant, the puzzling details of which Lundquist introduces but can give little resolution. There are simply too many unknowns about the size and placement, form of the cherubim and poles, and the final loss of the Ark to satisfy our scholarly or religious curiosity about it. The absence of the Ark of the Covenant in the Second Temple Period raises perplexing questions about how the Israelites reconciled this loss with their theology and practice of sacred space. What was once viewed as God's throne on earth and a central part of the yearly purification on the Day of Atonement was now gone, yet the temple remained the central focus of Israel's worship. Within Second Temple literature, there is a more developed theory of the temple, or temple ideology, as Lundquist likes to call it; these later writers were more interested in the primordially and cosmic scope of the temple rather than its physical construction on earth.

Lundquist strongly pushes the notion that the Jerusalem temple influenced, and continues to influence, Western religious tradition through the temple's lingering memory in Jewish, Christian, and Muslim architecture and thought. The Jews primarily spiritualized the temple in their synagogue worship. The Christians, he argues, superseded the Temple Mount with first the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and then Saint Peter's tomb in Rome because Jesus' sacrifice removed the need for the temple sacrificial system.

The Crusades ignited a new focus on the ancient temple and created new movements (such as the Knights Templar and Masons) that were supposedly patterned on the ancient temple's initiatory rituals. These rites were not really discussed in the first part of the book when Lundquist talked about the actual temple and the worship that took place within its walls. The Muslims were heirs to the biblical tradition as well as believers in significant events that occurred at the former site of the temple during the ministry of Muhammad. As such they transformed the mount into a

Muslim worship site with the Dome of the Rock and the al-Aqsa mosques, both of which still stand today, centuries later.

While reading the book, I frequently felt frustrated that there were no diagrams and reconstructions of the architectural temple components being discussed. It was often hard to visualize exactly how the different parts of the temple fit together, such as the annex surrounding the *heikal* and the *debir* discussed on page 22. There were also several places in the text where the ordering of material lacked logic. For example, on page 24, the author presents three common theories about the exact location of the ancient Jerusalem temple on the current Temple Mount. He mentions a southern possibility but does not return to it, and then he jumps back and forth between a northern possibility and the current location of the Dome of the Rock. I would have found it easier to follow the discussion if each theory were presented in sequence. Furthermore, for those less familiar with biblical criticism, Lundquist's use of academic terminology, such as the P document and the Deuteronomic editor, could be confusing. The author does give a brief description of some of these textual critical aspects later (31), but a discussion of the term when he first introduces it would be more helpful. Another difficulty with the published book is that the endnotes are included in the back, broken down only by chapter number, without page ranges for the notes or even chapter titles. If readers do not remember the chapter number in which they are reading, they will have to flip back and forth to find the right endnote.

Although the Jerusalem temple was certainly preeminent and the model for all Israelite temple worship, I feel the author too easily dismissed other ancient Israelite and Jewish temple worship sites such as those at Arad and Elephantine. It would have been interesting and informative if the author would have explored their possible meaning, function, and relationship to the Jerusalem temple within the temple ideology he explained.

For LDS readers hoping to gain more insights into current LDS temple practice, this book will probably disappoint. Lundquist is more interested in the symbolism of the temple structure itself, not about what goes on inside the temple. However, the first few chapters provide a detailed background of the construction and world of the first temple (somewhat repetitively between the first two chapters), so those who may want the Old Testament fleshed out on these matters can find much of value. Also, the discussion on Christian views of the temple in the Middle Ages can provide some insight into similarities between Masons and Mormons.

The last chapter dives into prophecies about the future of Jerusalem and its temple, which provides interesting discussions on passages of scripture. In a world of potential religious conflict among Western religions, the

Jerusalem temple stands at the heart of volatile apocalypticism. How will a possible reconstruction of the temple on the Temple Mount affect the future of the three Western religions? It is certainly a thorny political and religious issue for any involved in the current affairs of Jerusalem. When dealing with sacred space—and the Jerusalem temple site is considered one of the holiest in the world—there is usually no alternative space that will satisfy believers.

I think this book's strength lies in its use of comparative Near Eastern archaeology, but the discussion on the Jerusalem temple and its important role in modern and future Western religious tradition was somewhat less enlightening. Readers who have great interest in the ancient Near East will probably gain the most from this book. As someone who is interested in this area of study, I found the book engaging and well researched.

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Jared Farmer. *On Zion's Mount: Mormons, Indians, and the American Landscape*.

Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008

Reviewed by Jill Terry Rudy

On *Zion's Mount: Mormons, Indians, and the American Landscape* tells the tale of a beloved mountainous landmark and a disregarded lake. Jared Farmer's penetrating and sweeping gaze invites readers to view connections between land, landscape, and peoples that have remained, like Poe's purloined letter, hidden in plain sight. Farmer's story of "Timp" relates directly to the story of Indians native to the land and Mormon settlers who became "neonatives," in part by creating a significant landmark in Timpanogos and seeing imagined Indians while forgetting and displacing Utah Lake and real Indians. By illuminating these interwoven narratives with interdisciplinary research involving history, folklore, popular culture, and studies of place, Farmer cannily crafts a plea for recognizing homes and landmarks as signs of society and indicators of forgetfulness. He admits that his story of a lake and a mountain in Utah involves unique features but is not an anomaly in the colonization of the United States, where landmarks are created, imagined, and venerated with little awareness or consideration of historic events and displacements. As much a book about usable pasts as about American landscapes, *On Zion's Mount* argues that this story and these landscapes matter because "what we see affects what we do" (16). The unspoken plea in Farmer's closing call to move the love of the mountain down to the lake is for greater environmental and cultural awareness through more attuned historical understanding—with a hope to connect what we do, perhaps, more fittingly with what we believe.

In addition to presenting thought-provoking awareness of landmarks as a combination of natural, historical, and cross-cultural features and processes, Farmer writes with fine craftsmanship and abundant care in structure and style. The book is divided into three major sections, capturing the author's commitment to regional, local, and extralocal history and storytelling. An informative introduction establishes the juxtaposition of the lake and the mountain within the time frame of "the nineteenth century,

and for untold ages before" (1), while also engaging the scholarly discourse of landmarks, space, place, and the geographic practices of colonization.

The "Liquid Antecedents" section establishes the lake and the mountain in regional history, noting the primary significance of the lake to the Timpanogos people, or the "fish eaters," and Mormon settlers who could not resist the bounteous land. Playful interactions and deadly confrontations at the mouth of the Timpanogos (Provo) River eventually escalated until Mormon and US government officials created an unsuccessful Indian farming reservation and disrupted the migration and harvesting patterns of the fish-eating peoples. Acknowledging some involvement of women and children, Farmer focuses on male leaders from the LDS Church and leaders of various Ute bands. With ample discussion of warm springs, lakeside resorts, overfishing, and irrigation projects, Farmer attributes two main causes to the foundational shift of focus from waterways to the mountains: the "desertification" of the area—the story and belief that Mormon settlers arrived in a barren desert—and collective forgetting of the peoples and aquatic life that had been sustained by Utah Lake.

The middle section of the book, "Making a Mountain: Alpine Play," focuses on local history, centering on Utah Valley, BYU, and Mount Timpanogos, also connecting Timp with wider trends in Mormon culture, European alpinist tradition, and geographical surveys and mapping. Farmer persuasively argues that for the Timpanogos fish eaters as well as the early Mormon settlers, the prominent landscape feature of Utah Valley was the lake, and the mountain that would be known as "Timpanogos" was an undistinguished element of the mountain range. This changed as the lake was degraded, the Indians were no longer the most visible inhabitants of the valley, and other traditions for seeing the landscape took precedence. Distinguishing an earlier millenarian strain of Mormonism with its mountain retreats from a more acculturated and modern post-Manifesto version of mountains as recreational sites, Farmer finds the visualization and attachment to Timpanogos stemming first from a measurement fluke of the King Survey that seemed to place it at a higher elevation than its more distinctive neighbor to the south, Mount Nebo. Erroneously seen as the highest point along the Wasatch, the mountain drew interest and hikers, spurred by the early-twentieth-century popularity in America of alpinist activities that had enchanted Europeans for many decades. Timpanogos offered recreationists the highest mountain in the area. It also attracted visitors with its glacier, a cave, and a manageable climb uniting the best of mountaineering and hiking. Combined with the boosterism of the Provo Chamber of Commerce, the support of Brigham Young University, and the guidance of Eugene Roberts, then BYU athletic

director, the hike to the top of Timp became a decades-long annual tradition. By the 1940s, when another survey posited the elevation of Timp as several feet below Nebo, the attachment to the mountain had already been forged. Farmer traces how this attachment was not attenuated during economic transformations that brought Geneva Steel to (and from) the valley and shifted the agrarian lifestyle toward suburbanization with a continuing need for accessible wilderness.

In the final section of extralocal history, “Making a Mountain: Indian Play,” Farmer explicates how place names, lover’s leap legends, and various forms of “playing Indian” authenticate the American landscape. Returning to aspects of forgetting, Farmer notes that Indian names on the American landscape do not assure that native associations and cultural values have also inhered to the use of space and awareness of place. Timpanogos itself is a prime example because the name is now only associated with the mountain and does “little to remind Utahns of the days when Yutas fished from Timpanogó” (280). Calling the mountain Timpanogos creates a sense of longevity, and this feature of settlement is enhanced for neonatives when they know an Indian legend associated with a notable promontory. Farmer identifies Maiden Rock in Wisconsin as the foundation for Indian lover’s leap stories and provides many other examples, including stories associated with Timpanogos Cave and Bridal Veil Falls in Provo Canyon. He persuasively demonstrates that Eugene Roberts made up the story of Utahna and Red Eagle but shows how it was embraced by boosters, hikers, schoolchildren, cave visitors, and others to become an orally transmitted legend that endears the mountain to many. Combined with pageantry associated with the annual Timpanogos hike, ballets, operas, and other forms of cultural performance, the legend of Timpanogos seems to honor native inhabitants and the landmark while aiding forgetfulness about Utah Lake and the more complex historical relationships of Indians and non-Indians over the land itself. This section is extralocal because the story is still centered on Utah Valley, but Farmer connects the legends and performances with other colonizing trends and similar forgetfulness about displacements across the United States.

Farmer’s book won the 2009 Francis Parkman Prize awarded by the Society of American Historians. In accepting the award, Farmer admitted how intentionally he chose Timpanogos and Utah Lake because of their intense local associations. As an “Earth-based humanist,” he wanted to show how much cultural history was associated with a seemingly “natural” feature. Rather than choosing a more nationally known landmark, however, he also challenged himself to show a wider audience how these local features mattered in and beyond the local landscape and history: “Since

no one outside of Utah really cared about this invented landmark, I had an obvious benchmark for success. If I could convince my colleagues in U.S. history that Mount Timpanogos mattered—that it was the Martha Ballard of mountains—I would have met my goal.”²¹ The award demonstrates he reached his benchmark, and the reference to Martha Ballard demonstrates his alignment with prominent LDS historian Laurel Thatcher Ulrich and her book *A Midwife's Tale*. Thatcher has also reached a wide audience through attending to the local and mundane in broader spheres.

Farmer clearly makes astute choices to convince his colleagues that his story of the beloved mountain and disregarded lake resonates with many people and parallels many places. Calling himself an “expatriate Utahn,” Farmer not only writes for historians but also for himself, his family, and his Mormon progenitors and neighbors (15). He acknowledges two Utah State University folklorists, Barre Toelken and Steve Siporin, for providing the roots of the project. Appropriately, then, the conception and reception of the work also involve the regional, local, and extralocal associations forged into the structure of the book. Returning to the local foundation, Farmer gave a Charles Redd Center for Western Studies lecture at BYU in spring 2009. This is where I first learned of the book and immediately wanted to read it to fill gaps in my understanding of Indian and Mormon relations and a mountain I learned to love while growing up in the Draper corner of Salt Lake Valley. As a neonative a decade older than Farmer, I found resonance in his lament over the suburbanization of the Wasatch Front. He accomplishes the difficult task of indexing relevant scholarly conversations about place and time, of history and change, without miring the work in theoretical jargon. Yet Farmer surely sees in the rise of Timp the shadows of a cankerous modernity falling over the land. Fittingly, my large office window in BYU's Joseph F. Smith Building frames a view of Timp so stunning that sometimes students must consciously draw their attention from the view to converse with me. Affirming Farmer's point, I have never heard of this happening with colleagues who have a lake view.

Although the book merits its successes, it is not without glitches. As a folklorist, I find Farmer a little too quick to conclude that Mormon millenarianism and Zionism have all but disappeared when I see the sentiments remaining in contemporary traditional and popular expression, from oratory and song to rumor and visual images. After hearing Farmer's lecture, I included the book in my American Folklore course in fall 2009. While many of my students appreciated Farmer's frank assessment of Mormon and Indian relationships in the settling of Utah Valley, not surprisingly, some were uncomfortable and defensive about the current outcomes of that history. Most students took some exception to how Farmer presented

the Mormon aspects of the book. For example, writing of the succession of Brigham Young, Farmer states, “Brother Brigham portrayed himself not as the new Joseph Smith but as the Prophet’s right-hand man. Smith had been uniquely fey, as he had to be. Creating a religion—a new order—takes magic and disorder. Managing a large church requires a different set of skills. Stern and pragmatic, Brigham Young proved to be ideal for the job” (38). Some may think my students were uncomfortable with seeing revered prophets associated with such qualities of pragmatism, skills, magic, and accomplishment; indeed, one was concerned enough to request another book to read (easily available because of Farmer’s acknowledgment of resonant works). However, intense class conversation across the spectrum of acceptance to rejection of Farmer’s representation centered more on tone than on content. His voice can become rather imperious and occasionally glib. I believe my students recognized that in these sections, Farmer presents himself as the informed tour guide to Mormon ways, with insufficient acknowledgment of other ways of telling these parts of his story. My students correctly surmised that they were not the first intended audience for this book. Although written for and serving many audiences, the book seems to aim primarily at the extralocal level. But as the passage I have quoted also shows, the Church history is not misrepresented, and the writing itself is lively, compelling, engaging, and bright. The final conjecture of love returning for the lake reads as from the neonative son speaking to his own country. *On Zion’s Mount* is a thought-provoking invocation to anyone interested in and concerned about the American landscape, native and settler relations, Mormons and Indians, history, and home.

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1. “Extralocal History,” *The American Scholar* (Spring 2009), accessed at <http://www.theamericanscholar.org/extralocal-history> (accessed May 20, 2010).